

Western University

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY:

A PLAIN EXPOSITION OF VARIOUS SUBJECTS BASED
UPON DIVINE REVELATION.

BY

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PREFACE.

IN this enlightened age of the world, it is desirable that all classes of persons be more or less educated. And in their education there should be included the science of theology : and especially that class of it which is truly practical, as based upon the Word of God.

The attainment of this knowledge is necessary to qualify us for the discharge of the various duties in life. In a word, that we may be enabled to answer the end of our creation, it is absolutely indispensable. An uninspired system of ethics cannot properly teach man the duty he owes to his Maker, to his neighbour, and to himself.

To attain to any considerable degree of eminence in theological knowledge, it is necessary that we arrange our thoughts, reflections, and studies methodically. This is especially necessary in studying the Word of God, which is the only rule of our faith and practice.

With the professed followers of Christ every branch of theology should be well understood.

The design of the author, in this work, is to furnish the reader with a methodized arrangement of practical theology, based upon Divine revelation. To accomplish this, he has endeavoured to keep the Word of God as the standard of thought all through the entire work. And no section of it has been written to serve any party or sectarian purpose ; but with a sincere desire to benefit all classes, by pointing out privileges and enforcing duties.

It is the opinion of many wise and good men, that the most of our religious literature is doctrinal, historical, or

theoretical. And no doubt it will be admitted on all hands, that too small a proportion is truly practical, and that a larger portion should be devoted to experimental religion.

To aid in some humble degree in supplying this lack, the author has arranged in his work several chapters on practical subjects in sections, and in such a way that each chapter is a brief treatise complete in itself: whilst, in some instances, the chapter following is an exposition of the subject referred to in the last section of the preceding chapter.

Nearly the whole volume was written during the last year the author was stationed at Wardsville. Numerous pastoral duties prevented him from devoting that amount of time (to the task he had undertaken) which was necessary for such a work. He could only be employed in this way a few hours in the morning and evening, when released from other duties; which circumstance is here urged as an apology for any defects that may appear in the work.

Hoping for the liberal forbearance of the critic, and the impartial perusal of the candid, the author most respectfully presents it to the public.

C. V. D.

TORONTO,
1867.

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PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ORIGIN OF SIN.

1. A perplexing question. 2. Great mysteries. 3. A query.
4. Case of Mordecai and Haman. 5. The sealed book opened. 6. Sin entered our world, its effects, &c.

SECTION I.

AMONG all the perplexing questions that bewilder the minds of theologians, perhaps there is not one more puzzling than that of the origin of sin. The question has often been asked, How was it that before there was a devil to tempt in a pure and holy region, among sinless and perfect beings, sin could originate?

All admit there must be a cause to produce an effect. The question then presents itself, What was the cause that produced this dreadful effect? We may easily see the effect; but it is difficult to find the cause.

It is not calculated to satisfy the inquiring mind to say, These are secrets of heaven, into which we have no right to inquire.

But there are many other mysterious subjects connected with the fall and redemption of man with which theologians grapple, and which they sometimes conquer, but at other times fail to ventilate the mysteries, or throw any light upon the subject they undertake to investigate.

This question is one that is calculated to bewilder us in the outset. There is nothing to guide us in our investigations but conjecture. Revelation is silent upon the subject. As if we were to be doomed to ignorance in this great matter, we are left without anything definite on record.

SECTION II.

There are many other mysteries in the world besides those connected with the origin of sin. Indeed, the whole world is full of mysteries. There is nothing connected with our existence but it is a mystery. And every thing surrounding us is mysterious. It is mysterious to see fire produced by bringing into contact two opposite materials,—the steel and flint, both cold bodies; yet they produce heat by coming into violent contact with each other.

We may contemplate holiness and purity in heaven; but still we have to search for the mysterious cause that produced its opposite.

In the above case fire is the effect produced by a simple circumstance: that circumstance is the bringing into contact two cold bodies. These cold bodies appear to be opposite to the effect produced by the collision. And still we must admit the effect is produced by a simple circumstance. May we not therefore suppose that some circumstance might have occurred in heaven, among pure and holy angels, that produced an act to us apparently opposite to their nature?

SECTION III.

We admit the principle, that a sweet fountain cannot send forth bitter waters. A fountain of purity will not send forth a polluted stream. But the question is, Could any circumstance have occurred in heaven to pollute the stream? Or, in other words, could any circumstance occur among pure and holy beings, that would produce evil, which is opposite to the nature of the beings with whom the circumstance occurred?

It is truly difficult to lay down premises from which we can draw reliable conclusions in reference to the origin of sin. But we may glance at the subject by way of analogy.

SECTION IV.

We have a remarkable circumstance re-

corded in Scripture respecting Mordecai, a Jew, and Haman, the Minister of State in the court of King Ahasuerus. Mordecai sat at the King's gate, when two chamberlains conspired to lay hands upon the King. "And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the Queen, and Esther certified the King thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the King."

In the mean time Haman was promoted to a "seat above all the princes that were with him." And all the King's servants bowed to him. "But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." This filled Haman with indignation; and knowing Mordecai was a Jew, he sought to destroy him and all the Jews through the kingdom. Haman, having obtained authority from the King, caused letters to be sent throughout all the provinces, sealed with the King's signet, to destroy all the Jews, old and young, male and female, and take the spoil for a prey. But the Queen, Mordecai, and other Jews, fasted, and continued to send up prayers to heaven; and at the risk of her life the Queen entered the King's court. The golden

sceptre was extended to her, and she invited the King and Haman to a banquet.

But all this distinction and honour conferred upon Haman availed him nothing while Mordecai continued to withhold from him reverence. This was his greatest trouble; and his wife advised him to make a gallows, and procure the King's signet to Mordecai's death warrant.

But the prayers of the Jews had reached the ear of the God of Israel; and the mind of the King was greatly troubled, and his sleep fled from him. He commanded the book of records of the chronicles to be brought, and read. And while reading the account of the information that had been given by Mordecai, and which had been the means of saving the King's life, he asked, "What honour or dignity had been given to Mordecai" for that act of fidelity? The answer was, nothing had been done for him. At that moment Haman entered with Mordecai's death warrant in his pocket, for the King's signature. The King asked Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour?" Haman, already filled with vanity, "thought in his heart, To whom would the King delight to do honour more than to myself?" and answered, "Let the royal apparel and the

the crown royal be put upon him, and set him upon the King's beast ; and as he passes through the street, let it be proclaimed, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour." But when he was commanded to go and do so to Mordecai, "Haman hasted to his house mourning."

Now Haman's troubles began to multiply. His wicked designs were soon made known ; one reversion after another, in quick succession, followed. He was condemned, and at last executed.

SECTION V.

In this history of Haman we have some marvellous circumstances recorded. 1st. His being raised to a place of honour and power. 2nd. Mordecai withholding from him the reverence he desired. And subsequently Mordecai is raised to power and honour, and the life of the Jews spared.

Haman had conceived in his heart, that as he was the most distinguished among the princes in the King's court, and next to the King, the highest in the realm, the honour that was now to be conferred upon Mordecai was due to himself ; and his friends sympathized with him. The honours that had been conferred upon him

were circumstances that increased his ambition and fed his vanity; and his effort to secure other honours led to his own overthrow; and his sons and other friends also fell with him.

Not that we would speculate on this subject, or say, a circumstance of a similar character did occur in heaven, which terminated in a rebellion. Nor do we know what the Ruler of the universe, the wise Disposer of events, permitted, consistent with His own laws, when devising the scheme of redemption,—we know not when,—perhaps while the impress of His creating hand was yet recent on our world. And when the sealed book was to be opened, and no man in heaven or on earth was found worthy or able to loose the seals, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.” This fact is recorded in the fifth chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, in allusion to our Saviour taking upon Him our nature, and retrieving the affairs of a ruined world

Now, how do we know but a circumstance may have been connected with that event recorded, which caused a rebellion in heaven? We who can only see “through a glass, darkly,” have no means by which we

can draw conclusions on this mysterious subject, in reference to the origin of sin; but we may conjecture that, if, in the councils of heaven, when it was revealed that the Son of David, (we will not say a Mordecai,) a Man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, and one despised and rejected of men, was to be exalted a Prince and a Saviour of the world; an honour which the highest archangel might have desired; and, for all we know, he may have claimed it too, and, like Haman, thought in his heart, "To whom would the King delight to do honour more than to myself?"

If the "son of the morning," the brightest angel in heaven, supposed that honour was due to himself; and if one third of the angels in heaven concurred in the sentiment, it was an act of rebellion, and sufficient to cause them to be thrown over the battlements of heaven, and cast down to hell.

SECTION VI.

We may form conjectures on this mysterious subject, and draw conclusions from analogy; but, after all, the only reliable fact recorded is, that wherever sin was originated, or whatever were the circumstances connected with its origin, it entered

our world. It proved to be the death of man; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Sin is the dreadful scorpion of hell that entwined about the tree of life; and with his poisonous breath blasted the leaves which God designed for the healing of the nations.

Sin having polluted our race, it is from our progenitors we derive the corruption of our nature, from whence flow all our evil thoughts, words, and deeds.

In consequence of the contaminating influence and power of sin, we are unable to fulfil the demands of God's holy law. We are weak and wounded, bruised and mangled by the fall; prone to go astray, and inclined to rebel against our Maker. Our inability to fulfil the demands of the law, unless renewed by the grace of God, must for ever continue.

CHAPTER II.

OUR INABILITY TO FULFIL THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW.

1. Our inability to fulfil the demands of the Law; what implied in the Law. 2. Righteousness of God's Law; what it requires. 3. Demands of Law how fulfilled; why the lost suffer eternally [4. Christ's obedience to the Law; satisfied its demands. 5. Christ's submission; love and obedience excels all; an angel's exultation; law magnified. 6. Law fulfilled by Christ in us; Second Adam; Christ, end of the Law; one in Christ; relationship to God. 7. How nature renewed; Law will have its rights. 8. Christ came, not to free from obedience of Law, but to fulfil it. 9. All may partake of benefits of atonement; manifestations of wisdom; deep calls to deep.

SECTION I.

THOUGH we are utterly unable to fulfil the demands of the Law of God, yet we may have them fulfilled for us, and in us, by virtue of our union and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. He obeyed and suffered on Mount Calvary, so as perfectly to fulfil the Law. And now, all who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, have a right to the benefit of His obedience, as performed in our room and stead; "that

the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

By the Law we are to understand the moral Law, as it was given to Adam in the state of innocency, and as it was given by the Ruler of the universe from Mount Sinai, and written on the tables of stone, in ten Commandments, and explained by Moses and the Prophets, and by our Lord Jesus Himself, containing doctrines, precepts, prohibitions, promises, and threatening. The Law, in this wide sense, is just and righteous. This appears evident when we consider the perfections of God, our dependence upon Him, and our obligations to Him. He has just right to prescribe to us, and require our conformity to His will. Also, if we consider the matter of the Law,—the duties both of the first and second tables,—they are holy and righteous, having a direct tendency to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. The belief of the doctrines is necessary to obey the precepts; and they who fulfil the precepts shall certainly receive the promises; for He is faithful who has promised. On the other hand it is no less just and righteous that they who neglect or transgress this Law suffer according to the threatenings, as guilty of unrighteousness,

unbelief, disobedience, and rebellion against the supreme Lawgiver.

It is a righteous thing that no less punishment should be due for sin than death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, because the intrinsic evil that is in sin really deserves it; and because God, who is essentially just and righteous, and necessarily the moral Governor of the world, has appointed it. He cannot err in judging of things according as they deserve.

SECTION II.

The righteousness of God's Law not only implies justification; but some critics render it as meaning the "right of the Law," that which the Law requires, by which, when performed, the Law is honoured and satisfied. The Law has evidently a double right and claim upon us. It requires an absolute or full integrity and uprightness of the whole man; that he be thoroughly conformed to the will of his Creator and Lawgiver in thought, word, and deed.

The Law has a right to condemn us for nonconformity to God's will, and disobedience to His commands. It is right and equal that they who neglect and transgress the Law bear the curse,—the penalty of the

Law, and suffer the punishment threatened. "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them."

SECTION III.

The right and demands of God's Holy Law were fulfilled and perfectly satisfied by the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the summit of Mount Calvary.

If Adam had not sinned, he might have been saved by fulfilling the precepts of the Law. This would have been his righteousness in the faith of God.

Those who have missed their way, and are lost in perdition, are now fulfilling the threatenings of God's violated law. And because they cannot do this perfectly, they must for ever suffer. They can never satisfy the demands of justice by their own suffering, and therefore they must suffer eternally.

If, as sinners, we would be saved by the Law, we must fulfil the Law, both in its precepts and the punishments. The precepts must be strictly observed to the very letter, that we may receive the promises. And the punishment, which is the wages of sin,

must be endured ; unless justice be satisfied. But we can do neither of these of ourselves. We need a righteousness both of obedience and satisfaction. But neither the one nor the other is attainable by our doing and suffering. We are utterly unable to make full satisfaction to Infinite Justice for our sins, and so be freed from future punishment. And we need a gracious dispensation, and a holy conformity to the Law in our nature, to make us meet and able either to perform that obedience which the Law requires, or to enjoy the happiness that it produces. Therefore God, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, sending " His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled," and sinners saved.

SECTION IV.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as Surety for us, gave the most exact and perfect obedience to all the Law, both moral and ceremonial. This obedience to the Law was not due for Himself, for he was the Supreme Lawgiver,—the eternal Son of God ; and, as such, He assumed our nature without sin, and was able to keep the Law perfectly, and fulfil all righteousness ; that

notwithstanding "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Jesus Christ fully satisfied the demands of the Law on account of the penalty and the curse to which we were liable. According to the will and appointment of His Father, He voluntarily submitted to bear the wrath of God against sin, and made full satisfaction for the offences of a guilty world, in whose room and stead He appeared. And thus He wrought out both a righteousness of obedience, and a righteousness of satisfaction. He had no sin of His own; but He bore the whole curse of the Law for us. He "suffered, the Just for the unjust," to "bring us to God." Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The satisfaction that our Saviour made for us was perfect; for the infinite dignity of His person gave a sufficient value to His sufferings, and satisfied the demands of Infinite Justice.

This is evident from the fact that He took upon Himself our nature,—was made of the seed of Abraham,—our kinsman according to the flesh, and thereby obtained

the right of human redemption. Then, "in Him" dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" so that His Divinity gave efficacy to the sacrifice, and the atonement was complete.

This is evident from the consequences and effects of His sufferings on the cross. He was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. If He had not completed the great work He had undertaken, He would never have been released from the prison of the grave; our hopes would then have been buried in His tomb.

The crucified Saviour having completed His work, the Father accepted His sacrifice as a sweet-smelling savour; and the effect of it is a perfect expiation of the sins of the people; "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Thus was the righteousness of the law fulfilled for us. The law never got satisfaction till Christ suffered for us. He hath fulfilled and honoured the law by His obedience unto death.

SECTION V.

If all the love, delight, benevolence, and

obedience of saints and angels were united, multiplied, and extended to all eternity, still there is something in the benevolence, submission, love, and obedience of Jesus Christ, in completing the work of human redemption, that excels them all.

The dignity of His person is transcendent : the only-begotten eternal Son of God, made under the Law, is more worthy than all the saints and angels made under it.

It is no humiliation but rather an exaltation to an angel to be obedient to the Law of God. But it was a great humiliation to the Son of God ; and the greatest honour of the Law to be fulfilled by such a glorious personage.

In like manner the curses and threatenings of the Law could never possibly have so much honour any other way as by the sufferings of the Son of God. The most extreme sufferings of the creature could not atone for, or compensate, the infinite wrongs done to the holiness and righteousness of God.

Thus there could never be a determined time in which the curse could be fulfilled by the sufferings of the guilty, and in which justice could be satisfied. But our Lord Jesus Christ has fully satisfied it. Because of the infinite dignity of His person, there

was an intrinsic value in His sufferings proportioned to the infinitude or immensity of man's sin ; so that He could pay all our debt at once, which a sinner must be doing through all eternity, in case justice had exacted the punishment from us. As we could never have ended our sufferings, so we never could have begun new obedience to the command to all eternity.

If Christ had not become our Surety, and obeyed and suffered for us, the Law had never been fulfilled since it was first broken. But by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ it is magnified and made honourable. "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake : He will magnify the law and make it honourable."

SECTION VI.

The Law was fulfilled ; not by us, but by Christ, in us. That is, Christ in our nature fulfilled the righteousness of the Law, and therefore *in us*, because of our union and communion with Him. God sent forth "His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," and "condemned sin in the flesh," that all that the Law could require of us might be performed by Him for our benefit, as if we had performed it ourselves.

Jesus Christ was our legal representative,

—the second Adam. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." He is therefore the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

What Jesus Christ did and suffered in His state of humiliation, was done and suffered by one in our nature,—our near kinsman who had right to redeem, and who voluntarily substituted Himself in our room and stead, according to the will and appointment of God ; so that, according to the extent of the Law, when we believe in Christ, we are considered as obeying and fulfilling the Law in Him. "For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

That we may have an actual right to what Jesus Christ has done and suffered in our room and stead, and enjoy the benefit of it, we are united by faith to Jesus Christ in such a strict and intimate manner, that we are said to be in Him, and His Spirit in us. He gives us a new nature, and enables us to believe in Him. By faith we are made to be mystically one with Christ ; living members of His mystical body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the

members of that one body being many are one body : so also is Christ." By this union we are made fruitful branches of that heavenly and spiritual vine. Our Saviour said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without Me ye can do nothing."

Our relation to God is referred to in our Saviour's declaration, when He said to His disciples, "I will ascend to My Father, and your Father ; and to My God, and your God." And also we are hereby made partakers of the same Spirit. The Apostle Paul declares, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." And by His Spirit we are most intimately united to Him. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit."

And the very life that we live in the flesh is said not to be ours, but Christ liveth in us, and we "live by the faith of the Son of God." So that being thus one with Christ, His righteousness becomes our righteousness, even as our sins became His, though He knew no sin. And hence God deals with Christ and believers as with one person ; and therefore what was done by Christ with respect to the Law, may be said to be fulfilled

by us, who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

SECTION VII.

It is a great mercy that Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit, powerfully disposes and enables His people to answer the end of the Law by looking to Him for aid, and laying hold upon His righteousness for their justification, and a right to eternal life.

By His Spirit He renews our nature, and works in us a principle of righteousness and holiness. He enlightens the mind, enables and disposes us to honour the Law, and study conformity to it in the whole tenor of our lives.

Christ honours and fulfils the Law in His members, according to the gracious promise of God made by the Prophet Ezekiel: "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."

But those who are not in Christ Jesus continue to disobey and dishonour the Law, and live void of true holiness, though they may appear in their own eyes both good and righteous. But the righteousness of the Law is not only fulfilled by Christ for the benefit of man, but it is daily fulfilled in His people by His Spirit in a work of sancti-

fication; and if we prove faithful, it shall be carried on to perfection.

The righteousness of Christ being imputed to us, we receive His Holy Spirit, and then walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Such is the case of those in whom the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled. But those who indulge in known sin, and walk after the flesh, have no title to the righteousness of Christ; for they are not in Christ Jesus: and, depend upon it, the Law will have its rights in the ruin and eternal condemnation of all who repent not, but continue in a state of impenitence and rebellion against God.

SECTION VIII.

It is clearly manifest in the Holy Scriptures that Jesus Christ came not to dissolve our obligation to God, but rather to promote it. He came not to free us from obedience to the moral law, but to work out a righteousness for us, and bring us back to God in heart and life, and “deliver us from the hand of our enemies, that we might serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.

Our Saviour said, “I come not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.” He came to do what God had commanded, and to teach

us to do the same. He said, "For thus it behoveth us to fulfil all righteousness." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

What can be more inviting and encouraging than to know that God sent His Son to fulfil the righteousness of the Law for us, and in us; and to know that He declares that He accepts the atonement of Christ as a complete satisfaction for sinners; and invites them to come and receive pardon through Him, receive the benefits of the atonement, be united to Christ, our living Head, and prove the utmost of His salvation?

Awfully hard and desperately wicked must that heart be that can remain unmoved, and withstand such unbounded goodness and love, such condescension, such unparalleled mercy and grace, as manifested in God's method of saving sinners.

O let us be encouraged to flee to our Lord Jesus Christ for refuge from the wrath to come. Let none trust in vain satisfaction to the Law of God. Our tears, confessions, or good desires will not save us. Nothing but the blood and righteousness of Christ will meet the exigencies of our case. Will

you die in your sins, because you will not come to Christ for righteousness and life ?

Would you rather be condemned in sin, than be saved through Christ's merits, and sanctified by His Spirit ? There is no other way of salvation besides this, which is full of encouragement ; and the Lord has declared He will in no wise cast out any that will come unto Him.

Here are grounds of consolation to all who are convinced of sin, and desire to be saved from its influence, leprosy, and power. The Son of God is your surety : He has paid your debt, which acquits you at the hand of Justice. Think of what He did to fulfil all righteousness for you : because you were represented in Him, by faith you may now be united to Him.

When the sinner was condemned, Christ appeared and suffered for him. When we were dead in trespasses and sin, Christ interposed in our behalf, and died to redeem us.

Here is a solid ground of consolation against our fears and sorrows,—a remedy for all the accumulated guilt of the vilest of the vile. He is the one for all and above all. The Son of God came to retrieve the affairs of this sin-ruined world ; He obeyed and suffered whatever the Law could de-

mand ; and so made an ample atonement for the sins of the whole world.

Now in the fear of the Lord, if you can unfeignedly say it is the ardent desire of your heart to be delivered from your sins, as well as from wrath to come ; and that you no less desire to obey and honour Him, by forsaking sin, and walking according to the teaching of His holy word ; then the benefits and comforts flowing from what the Son of God did and suffered for His people are yours. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in you, through Jesus Christ, because God sent His Son, and condemned sin in the flesh, that He might save all who flee from sin to Him, as the hope set before them.

SECTION IX.

Some people would have particular answers to satisfy particular doubts ; but the heart-cheering promises in God's holy word are so full and broad as to satisfy every believer in Christ.

Here is a full cup of salvation and consolation to all who flee to Christ for refuge, and cleave to Him, and trust in Him, as our great High Priest who has atoned for us, our Prophet who will teach us the way of life and salvation, and our King to reign over us. " He by the grace of God tasted death

for every man." Then all may appreciate the benefits of the atonement.

But some may say, There are still those who continue to sin against God, and do not fulfil the obedience of the Law. We may answer, that this right of the Law is also fulfilled in them by our Lord Jesus Christ, if they will repent and believe in Him; for His righteousness is the end of the Law for justification to every one that believeth.

Unbounded manifestations of wisdom, and wonderful displays of the mercy and grace of God, may be seen in the method of salvation,—the execution of justice upon Christ, and the exercise of infinite mercy towards us. Without a satisfaction of infinite value, an atonement of infinite merit, justice could not have been satisfied; and, without an exertion of infinite benevolence and mercy, we could not be saved.

One deep calls to another: the depth of His justice, the depth of His mercy, the depth of our misery, and the depth of our guilt are about equal. If He had laid His justice upon us, where had been His mercy? If He had showed mercy without satisfaction, where had been His justice? But both these met in Jesus Christ; He satisfied the stern demands of inflexible

justice, and threw open wide the doors of Mercy, that we may have righteousness and everlasting peace. This the angels admire; and it is alike our duty and interest to understand and appreciate it, and give to God the glory.

We should honour and obey the law cheerfully and diligently, in humble dependence upon the grace and strength of the Lord; and daily strive to prove and improve our interest in Him by walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Holiness of heart and life is one part of our salvation, as well as the remission of sins. Christ is made of God unto us sanctification as well as righteousness. For "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

It is not only a part of our salvation to be delivered from sin, but the better part to be made pure and holy, to resemble God, and imitate Jesus Christ in all His imitable perfections.

Pardon frees us from punishment, but sanctification frees us from the corruptions of our nature. Sin is worse than pain. Moral evil is worse than natural evil. Holiness is the way to the kingdom of

heaven, and without it we cannot see the Lord. Let us, therefore, strive to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, that we may enjoy the favour of God here, and hereafter fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

The great fountain, where all may wash and be clean, has been opened by our Saviour, who is set forth as the Rock of our salvation; and as such represented by the Rock from which water flowed, to supply the wants of the children of Israel, while journeying through the wilderness of Arabia to the Promised Land.

CHAPTER III.

ROCK OF MERIBAH.

1. HEBREWS leave Egypt; enter wilderness of Arabia; eat angels' food. 2. Supplied with water at Rephidim. 3. Remarkable antiquity; Jewish tradition. 4. Lack of water in land of Kadesh; Moses exceeded bounds of commission. 5. Rock a type of Christ. 6. Prefiguration of sufferings of Christ. 7. Water representation of Holy Spirit. 8. Blessings presented in Gospel prefigured; general invitation.

SECTION I.

AFTER the children of Israel had left Egypt, and journeyed through the land of Goshen, through the Red Sea, and entered the vast wilderness of Arabia that interposed between them and the Promised Land, they did not proceed far before they found that all the provisions they had brought from Egypt were consumed; but the Lord supplied their wants, saying "unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will

walk in My law, or no." This promise was amply fulfilled. "Man did eat angels' food."

The children of Israel, following the pillar and cloud, pressed their way forward till they came to the land of Rephidim, where they again pitched their tents. But there was no water for them to drink. And the "people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink." They accused Moses of bringing them up out of Egypt to kill them, their children, and their cattle with thirst, and were ready to cast stones at him; but he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard his supplications, and commanded him to go on before the people, and take with him the elders of Israel, and the rod of Aaron in his hand; and the Lord assured him that He would stand before him there "upon the rock in Horeb." And He also commanded, saying, "Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

The Psalmist, in referring to this memorable event, says, "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to

run down like rivers." This was a wonderful display of the mercy and power of God, in supplying six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, with a mixed multitude, and all their flocks and herds, with abundance of water in a dry and parched land !

SECTION II.

The rock of Meribah, which was smitten by Moses with the rod of Aaron, out of which waters flowed in great abundance to supply the wants of the Israelites, has long been the subject of much interest to the Christian world.

This remarkable object of antiquity is supposed to continue to this day, and has been described by many modern travellers who have visited the wilderness of Rephidim. Dr. Shaw describes this extraordinary rock to be about eighteen feet square, of a reddish colour, and of the hardness of flint. In Deuteronomy it is called "a rock of flint." This traveller also states, that "it lies near the middle of a valley ; and seems to have been formerly a part, or cleft, of Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain ; that across one corner of the rock there is a channel which the gushing waters hollowed, about two inches

deep and twenty wide, all over which are a great number of holes, which have been so many fountains, as they do not appear to be formed either by art or chance; but every circumstance points out to us a miracle."

It is worthy of note, that the rock was smitten by Moses with the rod of Aaron,—the type of the Law; and that the waters then began to flow, and gushed forth in ample abundance to supply the wants of the famishing multitude. All this was done in the presence of the people and the elders of Israel.

When the rock was smitten, the waters flowed not in a scanty measure, but in such rich abundance as to afford large supplies for the numerous thousands, with their flocks and herds. Nor were the dry places in the wilderness, nor the drought of summer, able to drink it up.

SECTION III.

The Apostle Paul, in referring to this remarkable event, speaks "of that spiritual Rock that followed them." But the ancient Jews state that the streams from this rock followed them in their journeyings through the wilderness. They also say that, when they encamped, the waters formed themselves in pools, and the rulers of the people

guided streams or rivulets with their staves to the different tribes and families within the encampment. This may appear somewhat fabulous; but no more so than other facts recorded of this mysterious event. The Jews also affirm that this is what is implied in the song recorded in the Book of Numbers:—"Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." This may be termed a kind of war song; but, whatever view we take of it, it must be admitted that it has puzzled commentators and wise theologians to fix a meaning to it. The Jewish tradition may therefore be correct. Let those give a better interpretation who can.

SECTION IV.

We have no account of any lack of water from the time they left the wilderness of Rephidim until they came to the land of Kadesh; and then the children of Israel began to complain because there was no water. "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them.

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.”

But Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, and also exceeded the bounds of his commission. When he approached the rock, in obedience to the Divine command, and in the presence of the people, he lifted up the rod, and said unto them, “ Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch water out of this rock?” Moses should not have used the plural form of expression. He was but the humble instrument in the hands of the God of Israel to perform this miracle. He should not have said, “ Must *we* fetch water?”—making himself equal with God in performing this act. God will not be mocked, nor give His glory to another.

Also, Moses was to speak to the rock, but he exceeded his bounds, and with the rod he “smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly.” The miracle was wrought, but Moses offended his Maker; and for this transgression he was not permitted to lead the children of Israel into the promised land.

He was only permitted to view the land from Pisgah's top, but it was for Joshua to lead the Israelites through the stream of Jordan, and into the promised land.

SECTION V.

The rock was an eminent type of Christ, which we may infer from the words of the apostle Paul, who declared to his Corinthian brethren, when referring to the Israelites, "For they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

The Rock was an emblem or type of Christ, in whom there is everlasting strength, and on whom we may build our faith and hope as on a permanent foundation. This is a metaphor often used in the holy Scriptures. But never was it used before this memorable event; but since this remarkable occurrence, the figure has become familiar with both the Old and New Testament writers.

The Psalmist said, "The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust." And again he said, "For Thou art my Rock and Fortress: therefore for Thy name's sake lead and guide me." On another occasion the Psalmist exclaimed, "Be Thou my strong

habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me; for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress." And again he said, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." He also said, "The Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge." These examples might be multiplied, to show that the Rock was considered by the ancient fathers as a type of Christ.

But Christ is also typically represented by a stone. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste." To the same subject reference is made by the Psalmist, when he says, "The Stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." And to this our Saviour alludes, when speaking to the unbelieving Jews, He said, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"

When the great and magnificent temple was built by the Jews at Jerusalem, the stones were cut out, and each one fitted at the quarry for its proper place in the building: so that where the great temple was

erected, there was not heard the sound of a hammer.

Among the stones brought for the erection of the temple, there was one, so full of crooks and angles, the builders could find no place in the edifice that it would suit; so they condemned it, and cast it aside with the rubbish. But it so happened that when the temple was about completed, this rejected stone, with all its crooks and angles, was brought from the rubbish, and just suited the chief corner, and was the top stone of the building. To this, the Apostle Paul alludes when speaking of "the saints and of the household of God," he says, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."

Our Saviour is also called a "precious Stone,"—a "living Stone,"—because He is all life in Himself, and is the perfection of life to His people; therefore, the Apostle Peter, when alluding to those who truly believe in Jesus Christ, says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

SECTION VI.

Having established the fact that the Rock of Meribah is a type of Christ, it may not be amiss for us to conclude that the smiting of the rock was a prefiguration of the sufferings of Christ: He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:" "He was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

A wicked soldier dared to open his side with a spear, out of which came blood and water. In allusion to this, St. John the Divine exclaimed, "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

The rock was smitten with the *rod*, the type of the Law; and it was under the Law Christ suffered, being made subject to the ignominious death of the cross.

Also, the rock was smitten in the presence of the people and the elders of Israel. And Christ suffered at Jerusalem, the most public place, and at the most public time. It was at the Passover solemnity, when the Jews were gathered together from every

part of the land of Judea, when our Saviour suffered upon Mount Calvary, and for us completed the great work of human redemption.

Moses transgressed by smiting the rock the second time, and thereby came short of entering into the promised land. So "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

SECTION VII.

The water that issued from the smitten rock might signify, and most probably did represent, the influences of the Holy Spirit, that, like a river, pure as crystal, issues from the throne of God and the Lamb. To this element our Lord Himself compares the third Person in the adorable Trinity. When upon earth, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of [him]

shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The reason why this metaphor is used is obvious;—water will cleanse, will heal the sick, and refresh the thirsty. So the Holy Spirit will cleanse and heal our sin-polluted souls, and refresh our drooping spirits. As the Apostle Paul said, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

SECTION VIII.

But to take a more general view of this subject, we may suppose the water that issued from the rock in such abundance might signify the glad tidings of salvation, such as are presented in the Gospel, and such as are alluded to by the prophet Isaiah, when he said, "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." And again, God by the mouth of the prophet said, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool

of water, and the dry land springs of water,"—evidently referring to Gospel days, and Gospel blessings, and implying all the inestimable blessings purchased through the redemption of Christ, and foretold by the prophet, saying, "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

As the waters flowed from the rock in great abundance, and followed the children of Israel through the wilderness, so that we have no account of any lack of water till the fortieth year of their pilgrimage; so there is a fulness in Christ Jesus. A fountain is opened for all. "Its streams the whole creation reach." This river of munificence will roll to the habitation of nations yet unborn. The invitation is given to all: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

This river of salvation flows so freely, that the winter shall not arrest it with icy chains; nor shall the drought of summer drink it up, for the promise is, that "in summer and winter shall it be."

But, notwithstanding this ample provision made for us, many remain carnally-minded, and in a state of enmity against God; while all the attributes of His nature are employed to make us happy. But to consummate this, and be made truly happy, we must be co-workers with God. We are commanded to "work out our salvation;" and though we are weak and powerless, we have ample means; and, if we use the grace given, we will obtain the power to use the means. And when we accept Christ, as presented in the Gospel, our joy is complete.

CHAPTER IV.

CARNAL MIND.

1. THE carnal mind; rebels against God: an enemy may be reconciled, enmity cannot. 2. Effects of carnal mind; how reconciled. 3. Carnal mind cannot delight in God; enmity develops itself. 4. Two reasons why wicked hate God. 5. Darkens understanding. 6. Not subject to law of God. 7. Enmity against Holy Spirit; evidence of love and hatred. 8. Seeds of enmity; first creation marred by sin. 9. Cause of rejection of Christ. 10. Difference between knowing and performing duty. 11. We should examine ourselves; fundamental law of kingdom.

SECTION I.

THE frame and temper of a *carnal* mind has a native tendency to death. In fact, it is a state of spiritual death. The carnal mind is death, because it is enmity against God: "for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." God will verily execute the threatenings denounced in His law against His enemies. They who are carnally-minded are enemies and rebels against God; therefore all who continue in that state cannot escape His righteous judgments.

That they are enemies and rebels the Apostle Paul proves from the state and frame of the carnal mind. The habitual and settled bent and tendency of the carnal mind is to act contrary to the authority and law of God; and therefore, for the vindication of His sovereign authority, perfect justice, and holiness, He must punish those who submit themselves to be governed by the corrupt principles of depraved nature, and retain the carnal mind.

But some may inquire, What is implied in the carnal mind? and others, What will be the consequence of being carnally minded? By the carnal mind we have represented to our view a person habitually swayed and governed by the affections and lusts of unrenewed and corrupt nature.

It may here be considered as reigning and prevailing in the alienation of the mind from spiritual and Divine things, and bending it towards things earthly and sensual,—opposed to spirit and life. It is enmity against God, because this state of mind is not reconcilable to the authority and laws of God. An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. That which is black may be made white, but blackness cannot.

This emphatical expression sets forth the perfect contrariety and stubborn opposition

there is in the desires, affections, inclinations, and actions of the carnal mind, to the nature and will of God. We love what He hates, and hate what He loves.

SECTION II.

While we continue under the ruling power and influence of the carnal mind, we are both unwilling and unable to obey the laws of God. The Law is directly contrary to the mind, and the mind opposed to the Law; and there is no way to break off this enmity between our Maker and the sinner, but by the destruction of those affections and lusts that constitute the carnal mind.

This work is commenced in regeneration, and carried on by the work of sanctification. Where this is not, there is enmity against God, and no dutiful subjection to His Law, nor indeed can be.

In every mind that is not governed by the Spirit and Law of Christ, there is a powerful and governing principle of enmity and rebellion against God.

As to the nature of this enmity, the wise man, Solomon, says, "An unjust man is an abomination to the just." That is, he is offended at him, he dislikes him, and cannot love him with complacency and delight. And the Psalmist says, "Do not I

hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" That is, he was greatly grieved with them. He had a dislike to them, and abhorred them, so far as they were enemies to God.

We may hate our sinful neighbours, as the true penitent hates and loathes himself because of his sins. But, in opposition to the love of benevolence, we must neither hate our neighbours, our enemies, nor ourselves. We may have a kind of love of complaisance, and be destitute of the true love of benevolence.

Now, if we apply this to the case betwixt our Maker and ourselves, we find that carnal men cannot be exculpated from hatred and dislike against God; because the nature and will of God are so directly opposite to their nature and will, which they indulge and please in opposition to Him.

SECTION III.

Love is founded on esteem. But the carnal mind loves what God hates, and hates what He loves; and where there is such a contrariety of nature and will there is hatred. Carnal men cannot delight in a pure and Holy God. What can they see lovely in God, or God in them? The God of Israel said, "My soul hateth them, and

their soul abhorreth Me." From this hating and loathing and offence none can excuse themselves, until they hate what God hates, and love what He loves. The wise man, Solomon, says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

There is a hatred or enmity which implies a wish to destroy the object hated. From this a carnal man cannot excuse himself, because there is in him a secret ill will that prompts him to attempts against the perfections and laws of God.

SECTION IV.

Carnal men hate God under a double notion. First, as a Lawgiver, opposing their wicked passions by His precepts. And secondly, as a righteous Judge and avenger of the guilty. A consciousness of this produces in them a slavish fear.

It is common for carnal men to hate those whom they have wronged, and also those whom they fear. And having wronged God exceedingly, and fearing that He will call them to an account; therefore, under the fear and dread of His vindictive justice, they hate Him. Infidels are molested with such fears, and wish there were no God. But they must first wish it to be so, before they can believe it; and then, in

believing it, they become consummate fools : for "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

SECTION V.

This enmity, founded on, and arising from, the corruption of human nature, is the more increased and strengthened, the more it gains the mind. It darkens the understanding; so that men have neither a due sense of happiness, nor of their duty. It engages the affections of men, and makes them slaves to corrupt passions and pleasures; as the Apostle Paul declares that "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." And by continuing in sin, these corrupt passions become exceedingly strong and inveterate. O, how difficult then to break off from evil habits! can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? No. If so, how can those do good, who are inclined and accustomed to do evil?

This enmity developes itself in acts of disobedience and rebellion against the Sovereign of heaven and earth, wilfully doing what He has forbidden, and refusing to do what He has commanded; and thus joining

with God's enemies in opposition to Christ's kingdom. In a word, they refuse to honour or obey Christ, or even to acknowledge Him as their King and Lawgiver.

SECTION VI.

Those who are carnally minded are not "subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be;" because the carnal and unregenerate do not firmly believe, nor seriously consider, that the Lord is, as He has revealed Himself, almighty and everywhere present, knowing all things, and perfectly holy, righteous, and good; for it is not the knowledge of God, but the power of their own corrupt affections, that controls their mind, and influences their practice.

They condemn the authority of God, as if they were not under any great obligation to order their lives according to His will. They neither fear nor love God in a dutiful manner; for their practice shows that they are not moved with the hope of that reward promised to those who obey, nor restrained from sin by the terror of the Divine threatenings. They expect peace, though they walk according to the imagination of their own hearts, adding sin to sin, and proceeding from evil to evil. Thus the carnal man condemns the sanction of God's holy law.

Those who are carnal slight the wisdom and love, mercy and grace of God manifested in the Gospel; and prefer worldly pleasures, and go their own way, "one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." They do not submit themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to acknowledge and honour Him in His mediatorial offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; and live in a continued course of disobedience to the laws of His kingdom. They will not deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Him. They will not repent of sin, so as to forsake it, and turn to God in the way of holiness.

SECTION VII.

The enmity of the unregenerate against the Holy Spirit appears in that they do not regard the evidences He has afforded of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth and excellency of the Christian religion. They resist the operations of the Holy Spirit in their own hearts, and make a jest of His gracious influence in the hearts of others. They do "alway resist the Holy Ghost."

Their enmity appears against the godly, who in a spiritual sense bear the image of God, in so far as they reproach and slander, ridicule and persecute them. For "who-

soever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Their enmity against God is manifest, in that they do not love God as their chief good. There is no medium between love and hatred; and God is so supremely excellent, and so much deserves our love, that if we do not love Him above all earthly objects, we may be justly said to *hate* Him. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Habitual and universal disobedience is a plain evidence of hatred and enmity. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." And again, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me:" therefore, they who do not keep God's commandments may be said to hate Him.

This is verily the character of the wicked. But in some this enmity is greater than in others; it is, however, that powerful and governing principle in every mind that is not renewed by the Spirit, and subject to the law of Christ.

SECTION VIII.

The corruption of our nature has in it the seeds of enmity and rebellion against God; and this original root of corruption is increased and strengthened by every act of sin we commit, and causes such an aversion and irreconcilable enmity against God and His holy law, that there is no friendship until the soul be renewed and delivered from the power of sin. The first creation is so dreadfully marred by the fall, that it cannot be mended but by a new creation, or regeneration: and therefore we are exhorted to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of our mind; and that we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Human nature being corrupted by sin, there is such a disagreement between God and man, that he cannot love God; and, until he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, he hates his Maker.

SECTION IX.

The law of God is pure and holy; in a word, it is directly contrary to the carnal mind; and therefore the carnal mind is opposed to

His law, and cannot be subject to it, until the power by which it became carnal be broken up and destroyed.

That which causes man to continue in this state of rebellion against his Maker, is unbelief. I mean not only a careless neglect of duty in general, but particularly rejecting Jesus Christ, as offered for our salvation. Hence, there is a want of consideration. Men give very little credit to the threatenings of the Law, and the promises of the Gospel; and so their enmity against God continues and increases; but those who firmly believe, and seriously consider their sins, and forsake them, as offensive to God, and defiling to the soul,—God has for them provided a remedy, the benefits of the atonement, and will give them a new heart, to love and delight in Him.

The natural and unconverted state is not only sinful but dangerous. It is a state of enmity and rebellion against God. The thought of this should make every unconverted sinner tremble. Though he be civil and sober, honest and obliging, moral and benevolent; yet, if his mind be under the power and government of his corrupt nature, he is an enemy to God, and a rebel against His government.

There are, perhaps, not many who will

openly and expressly declare war against heaven, or entertain direct and express thoughts of hatred against God: because there are some common principles of the law of nature written in the heart, which serve as witnesses for God against men, that God should be loved and adored, feared and obeyed; and that He has the highest claims upon us, and is supremely worthy of the highest esteem and veneration of our souls.

Now, this general acknowledgment deludes many; for they take it for granted that they do love God with the heart, because their conscience bears witness that they ought to love, serve, and obey Him: just as if it were all one, to know our duty, and to do it. Where is the unregenerate man who does not entertain a good opinion of himself, and who does not suppose his heart is right and true? For they say, "Whom should we serve, and whom should we love, if we serve not or love not God?" But if we know our own hearts, and our natural aversion to the law and will of God, we will at once see that we have no more reason to be satisfied with the mere confession of the truth, than Satan has reason to think himself a believer, because he is convinced that Christ is the Son of God,—and confessed it too. Such a confession of

duty may be extorted from lost spirits: therefore none should attempt to draw this *veil* over the wickedness of their hearts, and think that with them all is well, while their hearts are in a state of enmity against God.

It is so far from extenuating or excusing the sinner, that the very consideration of the great obligation to obey, love, and serve God, is the great aggravation of this enmity. Really, it is this that makes it pure malice and perfect hatred.

Many, knowing the goodness of God, and convinced of their duty to love and serve Him, yet in the great light of this shining truth, turn their hearts away from Him; and exercise themselves in many acts of disobedience and rebellion against Him.

SECTION X.

Now let us consider our own hearts and ways, and see if enmity be not as really acted out as if we did profess it. Can we say that the neglect of humble and fervent prayer, holy meditation, and self-examination, does not argue a dislike to the means by which we may draw near to God, and express our delight in Him?

Some may consider it a reproach to be called an enemy to God. I pray you consider if there be not as perfect discord and

opposition in your desires, affections, inclinations, and actions, to the will of God, as if you did profess it. What could you do more, if you openly professed yourself to be an enemy to God? Could you vent your enmity in any other way than by disobeying His commands, and revolting from the allegiance you owe to Him? Man can wrong God no further than to set his heart and ways contrary to His will, His nature, and His laws, in loving what God hates, and hating what He loves.

It is His will that we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. God loves righteousness, and requires truth in the inward parts. He looks favourably to a contrite heart, and accounts it an acceptable sacrifice.

It is a fundamental law and constitution of His kingdom, that we, as His subjects, should deny ourselves; forgive those who offend us, love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us. This is, I confess, a severe test of our Christianity.

But the carnally-minded are not subject to the law of God. Satan rules their hearts. And he will maintain his stronghold until He who is stronger comes in, and binds the strong man, takes away his

armour, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Let us look into the state of our own minds, and review the tenor of our own ways;—compare them with the nature and laws of God, and see if we do not find a disagreement, a want of friendship, which indicates enmity against God. And let us renew our covenant with our Maker, and be at peace with Him, whose frown is death, and whose favour is life, and health, and peace. All this may be obtained and enjoyed through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

It is the privilege of all to be saved from the carnal mind, from its pollution and all its consequences, and enjoy an assurance of the Divine favour, and an evidence that we verily are of the household of faith, our sins forgiven, and our names registered in the Lamb's book of life.

CHAPTER V.

FRUITS AND EVIDENCE OF CHANGE OF HEART.

1. In what Christians may differ and be one in heart; in what they must agree. 2. What implied in change of heart. 3. Nature of this change; the cause how wrought. 4. Fruits of change of heart. 5. The evidences; from Scripture; from reason. 6. The time when change is wrought. 7. The necessity of change founded in Divine command; death cannot effect the change.]

SECTION I.

IN the former chapter we endeavoured to show that, while unregenerated, we have a carnal mind, which is enmity against God; and while in that state we are enemies to God, in a state of spiritual death, and exposed to death eternal. But we purpose, in this chapter, to show that it is our privilege to have our nature changed, our relationship to our Maker changed, and our prospects changed.

But it may be asked, In what does this change consist? This is an important question; and in answer to which Christians of every denomination should agree.

The followers of Christ may differ in opinion in reference to forms of church government, and modes of worship, and still be one in heart. They may materially differ in minor points of doctrine, and still be Christians. All who believe in the cardinal doctrines of the Bible, receive Christ in all the offices He sustained in completing the great work of human redemption, and daily strive to imitate Him in all His imitable perfections, compose the great compact family of Christians on earth. But an error in this doctrine, respecting a change of heart, and a change of our relationship to God, may prove our ruin; therefore, in reference to this change, all should agree both in faith and experience.

Christians of various denominations entertain different opinions in regard to what is really implied in the change of heart, and renovation of our nature. Some suppose that all that is implied in regeneration is simply water baptism. But, while this is a duty enjoined upon all Christians, still it does not supersede regeneration of heart. It needs no argument to prove that a man may be baptized with water, and continue as wicked as Lucifer. See the case of Simon Magus; he was baptized, but continued a great sinner. After receiving bap-

tism, at Samaria, from the hands of Philip, with whom he continued for a while, still his heart was not changed. Peter said to him, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

Now, as this change of heart implies something more than water baptism, so, also, it implies much more than mere morality. A young man once came to our Saviour, while upon earth, "and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Our Saviour referred him to the cardinal commands in the Bible; "the young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up." But still he was found lacking, and went away sorrowful.

Nor do acts of benevolence supersede this change of heart. The Apostle Paul says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity;" (or in other words, love;) "it profiteth me nothing."

It is evident that we may be baptized with water, be strictly moral in our lives, and abundantly benevolent in our purposes, and still be unregenerated in heart, in a state of enmity against God, rebels against

the laws of His kingdom, and exposed to His wrath.

SECTION II.

Now, as to what is implied in this inward work, or change of heart. In the first place, it implies an illumination of the mind.

When "the Day Star from on high" shines forth upon our hearts, the clouds of moral darkness recede, and we at once see light in the light of the Lord. And then we discover the intrinsic evil of our sins,—not only as offensive to God, but defiling to our souls. This we are not able to discover, while in a state of moral blindness. One of the first operations of the Holy Spirit on the heart is, to illuminate the mind. By His influence we are enabled to discover our obligation to obey God's commands, and our privilege to enjoy His favour, which is better than life.

In the second place, it implies an inward work,—an internal revolutionizing of the soul; the judgment being corrected and our nature changed. Or, as expressed by the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Thirdly, it implies a new creation. Our nature is so dreadfully mangled by the fall, that it cannot be repaired or mended. The Apostle Paul, when writing to his Corinthian brethren on this subject, said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

This also is accomplished by the Holy Spirit; for it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This work being wrought in us, and we having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us, we may go on to perfection.

SECTION III.

As to the nature of this change, it is called "a birth." The Apostle Peter, referring to the subject, says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The reason why this metaphorical expression is used must appear obvious, when we consider that by a natural birth we are introduced into this world, breathe its air, and have union with

the things of the world. So, in like manner, when we are born into Christ's spiritual kingdom, we breathe a spirit of prayer and praise. By faith we then draw a sweet and Divine life to the soul, and, at once, breathe it back to God in offerings of praise and thanksgiving. In this way the vital spark is kept alive in the soul of the believer, and we grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

The moving cause of this work being wrought on the heart of the believer, is the love of God. It was the love of God that first set the apparatus, or wheels of man's redemption in motion. God so loved the world that He could not behold it sink down into everlasting ruin, without making a wonderful manifestation of His mercy and power, to save to the uttermost all who believe in Him.

The efficient cause in accomplishing this work is the Holy Spirit. For, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth." And our Saviour said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." All who are led by the Spirit of God are His sons, and "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" for the law of the Spirit of life makes them free from the law of sin and death. "But the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

The instrumental cause is the word of God ; by this we are taught our danger and our duty. Threatenings are made against the ungodly, and the most cheering promises are held forth to those who love and serve the Lord ; also instructions to seek and serve Him aright. We are therefore commanded to search the Scriptures ; for they testify of Christ.

But, on our part, faith is the instrumental cause. By faith we lay hold of the promises, and claim the blessings purchased for us. Faith is a firm assent of the mind to the truth of God's word, embracing all His threatenings and promises ; all which are firmly established upon the authority of Divine revelation.

By the exercise of this kind of faith we receive Christ as He is presented in the Gospel,—our Prophet, Priest, and King ; and thus trust in and rely upon Him and His righteousness for our justification and salvation.

This faith is a living, active principle, and begets in us sincere obedience to God's commands. Reason cannot discover by its own light the doctrines and promises respecting our salvation through Christ ; nor can it convey to our understanding these truths, even when revealed. " For therein is the

righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." By works faith is made perfect. Not that we derive our faith from our works, but that we derive our works from our faith, and manifest our faith by our works.

SECTION IV.

Every cause must of necessity produce a corresponding effect. The effects or fruits of this change are various, and in many respects somewhat numerous.

The first fruit of this change of heart is love to God. No sooner does the genuine penitent feel the burden removed from his heart, and is made conscious of pardon, and feels the regenerating and quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, than the first emotion of his new born soul is to give praise and glory to God. We love God because He first loved us. "And every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: for God is love." The first and greatest of all commands is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

The second fruit of this change of heart is love to God's people: for "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth Him that

begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous."

It is perfectly natural for those who love God, to love those begotten of God. "This was the message from the beginning, that we should love one another." We are taught of God that we love one another. We evidently love the people of God when we love God; he who loveth God loveth his brother also; for, "every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him."

Another fruit of this change is, that we love all people, both saint and sinner. What, love those who hate God! Yes; for we are commanded to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. We may love the sinner, and hate his ways. In this we have the example of our Saviour, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. And when the Jews were clamouring for His blood, His prayer was, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

And another fruit of this change is victory over the world. "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The true Christian though, but a man on his feet, is a Samson on his knees; and by faith may obtain strength to vanquish every spiritual foe, and triumph over the world, the flesh, and Satan.

And also another fruit of this change is obedience to all God's commands. Those who are born of God serve Him because they love Him, and love Him because He first loved them. Love is the all-inspiring incentive of our obedience to God. And in proportion as we love God we will love to obey all His commandments.

In a word, we may add, that the fruits of this change imply, a free pardon for all our sins, and a consciousness of the Divine favour; the testimony of a good conscience, and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This will afford us strength and comfort in the midst of the ills that stand in our lot in life, and produce drops of cordial in every cup of affliction we are doomed to drink. It will also let down hallowed streams of rich consolation in the hour of death, and afford a blooming hope of heaven.

Such the fruits in this world; but if we

contemplate its eternal fruition, on the other side of "Jordan," We are lost in wonder. Finite minds cannot grasp, or even contemplate, infinite bliss. It has not yet entered into the mind to conceive the ineffable glory that awaits the faithful in heart.

We can read the heart, cheering promises of an inheritance in glory,—of a crown in glory,—of a weight of glory,—of a far more and an exceeding weight of glory; but when we attempt to fathom an eternity of glory, we are at once bewildered. With the most lively imagination of the human mind, in the attempt to contemplate the glorified millions of redeemed souls fluttering around the brilliant throne of God in glory, and that after they have climaxed ten thousand times ten thousand years, that there is still infinite glory above, is a thought too high for mortals. In the attempt to fathom this infinitude of glory the mind become, bewildered, strangled, and lost in the contemplation.

SECTION V.

Now for the evidences of this change of heart in the true believer. Here we are placed on disputed ground; but what of that? We have a right to contend for the privilege of the Christian, and for the truth as it is in Jesus.

No doubt there are sincere Christians who do not know their privilege, but urge the inquiry :—

“How can a sinner know
His sins on earth forgiven?
How can my gracious Saviour show
My name inscribed in heaven?”

If the truth of the doctrine, of a knowledge of sins forgiven, depended on *negative testimony*, we might say that neither reason nor philosophy teaches us why or how we exist; and yet we *know* that we *do* exist. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

But this doctrine is not founded upon doubt or uncertainty, nor its truth upon negative testimony, but upon the truth of Divine revelation, common sense, and reason.

That it is the privilege of the Christian to know his sins forgiven, is evident from the word of God, which renders it certain. Paul to the Romans states, that “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Nothing need be more plain than the fact here asserted, that God’s Spirit bears wit-

ness with ours, that we are His. And this fully agrees with the testimony of John the Divine, who declares that "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." And again, St. John says, "Hereby KNOW we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

Some professing Christians think it presumptuous to say we KNOW our sins forgiven, and KNOW we are the children of God. They say, they *hope* so. They contend that we may *hope*, or even *believe*, we are adopted into the family of God, and *believe* we enjoy His favour, but cannot *know* it. But St. John says, "Hereby we KNOW that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

We sometimes believe what we subsequently find to be untrue; but there can be no error in what we KNOW to be true. And St. John does not say we *hope*, or we *believe*, we are the children of God; but, "Hereby KNOW we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." And he also declares that "he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we KNOW that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us."

Language could not be more emphatic.

or plain to show that it is the privilege of the Christian to KNOW his sins forgiven, and KNOW he enjoys the favour of God, and can say,

“What we have *felt* and *seen*
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.

We who in Christ believe
That He for us hath died,
We all His unknown peace receive,
And *feel* His blood applied.”

In the five chapters contained in the first Epistle of John, the word *know* occurs more than twenty times. He says, “We KNOW we have passed from death unto life;” and again, “That we KNOW Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

In addition to the experience, knowledge, and emphatic declarations of the apostles, confirming the truth of the doctrine of a knowledge of sins forgiven, and a knowledge of our being in the favour of God, we only need refer to the words of our Saviour Himself. In the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel by St John, we have an account of our Saviour's comforting His disciples. He said, “I go to prepare a

place for you ;” but, He added, He would not leave His people comfortless, but would pray the Father, and He would “give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth ;” and then adds, “At that day ye shall KNOW that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.”

Our Saviour said, “In that day.” What day? Evidently in that day when ye receive the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the “Comforter ;” “in that day ye shall KNOW” that you are in Christ, and Christ is in you. He did not say, In that day ye may hope, or even believe, you are in Christ, and Christ in you ; but, “Ye SHALL KNOW” it. If we had no other proof in Scripture, this is sufficient to establish the fact. Who dare deny the words of our Saviour? Or who can give any other exposition of His words than is here given? Does He not say “ye shall *know* it?” Let no one deny or doubt this privilege of the Christian, but all seek for it, and never rest till it is obtained.

SECTION VI.

Having maintained the doctrine of a knowledge of sins forgiven, and that we may know our names are registered in the Lamb’s book of life, from the truth of Divine

revelation, we now proceed to show that the truth of this doctrine is also confirmed by common sense and reason.

We might talk about a man being literally dead, and not know it ; but it would be extremely absurd to say a dead man could be brought back into life, and not know it. It would not be according to the dictates of common sense, or reason, to suppose that Lazarus knew nothing of the change, when our Saviour called him from the grave, and he sprang into life. And it would be equally absurd to suppose that an exanimated soul, dead in trespasses and in sins, could feel a mighty shock of Divine power, to arouse him from torpor, and from the embrace of spiritual death, into a state of vital strength and spiritual life, and he know nothing of it !

While slumbering on our pillow, folded in the arms of sleep, we remain in a state not conscious of our own existence, and know nothing. But would it be reasonable to suppose that when we awake we remain ignorant of our own existence ? And it is just as much opposed to common sense and reason to suppose that a soul locked up in the sleep of sin, not conscious of duty or danger, can be awakened by the mighty power of God

to a sense of danger, and made to feel the burden of sin, and at last obtain peace and pardon through faith in the Redeemer, and know nothing of all this !

If a man literally blind be restored to sight, is he not keenly sensible of a change ? Would it be reasonable to suppose that when Bartimeus was restored to sight he knew nothing of it ? How was it with one born blind ? After our Saviour restored him to sight on the Sabbath day, there was an uproar among the Jews, and his parents were interrogated on that subject ; but fearing they would be cast out of the synagogue, if they acknowledged the power of Christ, they cowardly referred to their son, and said, He is of age, ask him. And when the Jews questioned him by what means or by whom the miracle was wrought, he appeared to know but little about the person who had restored him to sight ; but there was one thing he did **KNOW** ; that was, whereas once he was blind, he *knew* that now he could see.

A state of sin is represented as a state of judicial spiritual blindness ; and, if so, is it not reasonable to suppose that when the pure light from heaven breaks in upon the human condition, and the sinner is made to see light in the light of the Lord, he is keenly sensible of the change ? Is it possi-

ble that the whole town of a man's soul can be gilded with light from heaven, and he know nothing of it? Verily, it is the privilege of the Christian to know that he is brought out of darkness into light.

But, it may be asked, Who denies it is the privilege of the Christian to know his sins forgiven, to know he enjoys the favour of God, and to *know* he is brought from darkness into light? Of course, only those who have never experienced this change. And are they competent to judge in this matter? Is a blind man a good judge of colours? If we close our eyes at noon-day, and proclaim that we do not see the light of the sun, it is only a proof of our own blindness. But still there is light for the Christian, and he may proclaim,—

“ We, by His Spirit, prove
And *know* the things of God,
The things which freely of His love
He hath on us bestowed.
His Spirit to us He gave,
And dwells in us, we *know* ;
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all its fruits we show.”

Again, if we are on a bed of affliction, racked with most excruciating pain,—and if means are used, and we restored to perfect health, and freed from sickness and

pain, shall we not know, from experience, the change in our condition ?

The wise man, Solomon, says, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity : but a wounded spirit who can bear ?" A man may bear up under the infirmities, pains, and afflictions in body. All this may be tolerable ; but the wounded spirit—the crushed and mangled soul, under a deep sense of guilt and sin—feels a mental grief and pain that is intolerable. If so, then, when the burden of guilt and sin is removed from the heart of the true penitent, will he not know there is a change in his condition ? Will he not *know* a great change has been effected in his condition, when he can exclaim, "Now I no condemnation feel ?" Verily we may know our sins forgiven.

If we should see an angel descend from heaven, and hear him declare that our sins are all forgiven, that God has bestowed His favour upon us, and that He recognises us as His children, and that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, of course we would believe it. When we see and hear, we should believe. But even then we would not know it from experimental knowledge. And in that case, we might subsequently entertain doubts. But we have a more sure and permanent foundation to build our

hopes upon. It is the witness of God's Spirit, and a knowledge founded in experience. We may feel the bliss His wounds impart—feel the burden of guilt removed—feel peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and feel happy in His love. Feeling is the naked truth, and leaves no room for doubts.

Once more, do we know whether we love or hate our neighbour? If so, then verily we may know if we love God with all the heart. If we are capable of knowing any thing of the feelings of our own hearts, or the motions of our minds, we may know whether we are filled with love or hatred towards our Maker, or our fellow men.

Finally, if we can know any thing, if life is not a dream, we may know whether we are sorrowful or joyful. And if so, then when we feel the evidence of our acceptance with God, we may KNOW we enjoy His favour, and know *verily* that we are happy in His love.

SECTION VII.

Having endeavoured to show that it is the privilege of the Christian to know his sins forgiven, and that he is changed from nature to grace, we shall now direct atten-

tion to the time when this change of heart is effected.

Some Christians can tell the precise time and place when their chains fell off, and their dungeon was made to flame with light. While they were mourning a Saviour's love to know, by the exercise of faith, in a moment, their burden was removed, and at once they leaped for joy, made happy in a Saviour's love; and then they could say,—

“Jesus all the day long
Is my joy and my song.”

But there are other devout and faithful Christians who cannot fix upon the precise time when they obtained pardon and peace, through faith in the Redeemer; and sometimes, when they hear those relate their experience, who can tell the time and place when the Lord spoke peace to their souls, they are thrown into doubts lest their own experience in religion is not sound or genuine.

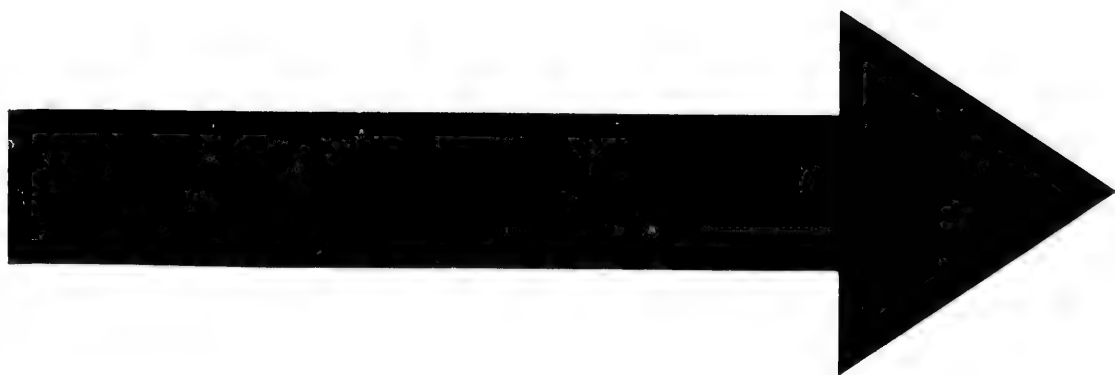
It may not be amiss to philosophize a little upon this subject.

We read of Bartimeus, and other blind men, who applied to our Saviour while upon earth, and were instantly restored to sight. And also St. Mark gives us an account of the Jews bringing to our Saviour a blind man :

And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town ; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught." The blind man looked up and said, " I see men as trees, walking." It appears, he then began partially to see ; the work was commenced. After that our Saviour " put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up ; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."

Now we have only to ask, Which of these men has the best evidence of being restored to sight, the one who gained his sight by degrees, or he whose vision was opened at once? We presume they both can say, " Where-as once I was blind, now I *know* I can see."

Again, when the sable curtains of night are closed around us, supposing two men begin at the same time to sleep and slumber : the one sleeps soundly till after sunrise in the morning, and when he awakes he instantly beholds the open face of day. But the other awakes before the day dawns upon him ; he anxiously looks for the approach of light, which at length gradually appears, and after anxiously watching for a season the approach of day, at length the sun rolls up from the chambers of the east, and gilds the sky with a flood of light.



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We ask, Which of these men is best satisfied that they are in the light? Both know that while it was night they were in darkness. And now they know they see the light of day. One is as well satisfied of the change from night to day, and from darkness to light, as the other.

Once more ; we will suppose two men sick of the same disease. A remedy is provided, and one is instantaneously healed ; the other recovers by degrees for a week or two, and then finds himself every whit whole. They were both sick ; now, both are well. The one was healed at once, the other by degrees ; in the case of one the change was sudden, in the other gradual. They both know they now enjoy good health, and can rejoice together.

Some penitents exercise that degree of faith that enables them at once to drink deep in the cup of salvation : and according to the degree of faith they exercise, blessings are imparted ; and when they by faith repose implicit confidence in God as their Father, and rely on Christ, trusting alone in His merits for salvation, the eyes of their understanding are opened, a flood of light breaks into their minds, and by faith getting a firm hold of the promises, they at once feel the bliss a Saviour's wounds impart,

and immediately rejoice, under a sense of pardon.

But other penitents equally sincere, and equally anxious to obtain the favour of God, continue to confer with flesh and blood and ponder over their past sins, and ruminate on their present unworthiness, as if they could earn heaven, or merit salvation, by mourning over the past, or at least by this means strive to make themselves better.

Being sincere and anxious for salvation, they continue to plead for mercy, and urge their suit at a throne of grace, and hope that after they have sorrowed, and grieved, and repented a while longer, God may have mercy. In this way they cannot be fully blest; but, in the exercise of this small degree of faith, they obtain a crumb from our Master's table, a small foretaste of the joys of salvation, though not yet able to rejoice; but the work is commenced, and in every subsequent effort to believe, they are in a measure comforted and strengthened, but still tormented with doubts. But increased desire for salvation prompts them to persevere, and continue to hope for an evidence of their acceptance with God. Thus they continue to make a little progress in the way. One fetter falls off, then another; and one doubt is removed, and then another. The poor

soul thus continues till every fetter is broken, and every doubt removed, and the spark that only twinkled at first is raised to a flame, and the light that only dawned at the beginning has increased to a noonday splendour. They at first could only see "men like trees, walking," but now they can see "light in the light of the Lord;" and at last are enabled to say, "I now no condemnation feel."

The sanctified believer has as much authority, from the word of God, which is a living fountain of truth, to believe his sins forgiven, as the glorified in heaven; and his experience on earth, when he receives the witness of the Spirit, is equally satisfying.

SECTION VIII.

Now, it only remains for us to show, that it is necessary for us to experience this change of heart while in a state of probation.

While we live in this world, we may enjoy temporal blessings, the unconditional benefits of the atonement, such as food and raiment; for the Lord sends rain upon the just and unjust. In this way we may enjoy material happiness. But this can only be enjoyed while we live. It needs no argument to prove that a lifeless body cannot

enjoy material happiness. And it is equally certain that a dead soul cannot enjoy spiritual blessings. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Therefore our Saviour added, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

The absolute necessity of this change of heart is founded upon the Divine command. And the injunction concerns both worlds. It involves our happiness here and hereafter. With us, all eternity rests upon this event. If this change be wrought, we will be happy ; if not, we remain for ever in a state of rebellion against the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

There appears to be no alternative. We must experience a change of heart, or be lost for ever. Our Saviour has declared that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." While carnally minded, we cannot do the will of God ; for the carnal mind is enmity against God ; therefore, until this change be wrought, and we be renewed in the spirit of our minds, we continue opposed to His government.

There is nothing in Scripture, reason, or philosophy, that teaches us that death will

effect any change in our nature. If we die in our sins, we must remain in our sins for ever. If we leave this world in a state of enmity against God, we will stand His enemies in the world to come. And unless our nature be changed, or God in His nature changes, that enmity must continue while eternal ages continue to roll. Now that Being that exists by virtue of His own nature is immutable. The heavens may be consumed, and the earth dissolved and pass away, but God will remain the same for ever. He changeth not. He who is immutable cannot change. Therefore the sinner's heart must be changed here or hereafter, or he must continue a rebel against God for ever and ever.

Some people when perplexed wish themselves in heaven ; poor souls ! they might as well wish themselves in hell ; for unless they be regenerated and "born again," Heaven would afford them no happiness. It is not the position or place we occupy that will make us happy, but the preparation and qualification for that place. If it were possible for a sin polluted, vile, rebellious, and unregenerate soul to pass through the gates into the New Jerusalem, could he enjoy the felicity of heaven in the presence of a pure and holy God ; and could he mingle with

those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Or could he delight in chanting the praises of God in heaven, with that rebellious heart and depraved nature he possessed on earth, opposed to the laws of Christ's kingdom, and the worship of God?

Depend upon it the sinner's nature must be changed, or he must roll over in hell eternally. But it may be asked, Is there no prospect for a change in our nature after death? Common sense answers "No." Hell is no infirmary to cure up a sin-sick and polluted soul, and fit it for heaven; and the devil is a poor reformer. How monstrous the thought that a pure and Holy God would send a soul to the devil to be reformed, and prepared for heaven! Or that a sin-polluted soul would be sent to purgatory to be purified, and fitted for heaven! Such a thought is full of infidelity. And such an enterprise in itself would be dangerous for the sinner; for while the word of God informs us how to keep out of hell, it affords no information how a sinner can get out of hell. There is a great gulf in the way!

In conclusion we may add, that God in His nature cannot change. The sinner cannot be changed after death; and as his nature must be changed, in order to be at peace

with God, therefore his nature must be changed while in this world, or he will be lost and undone for ever. But God willeth not the death of the sinner. He has sworn by Himself, that He would rather all would come unto Him and live,—all are invited; but there is no time to lose; this is the day of salvation; and we have no promise of to-morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

FAITH AND WORKS.

1. Faith and believing synonymous. 2. Faith, the gift of God, or act of the creature; what is necessary to constitute faith; what faith is. 3. The effect of faith. 4. Enlightens mind. 5. Guide to traveller lost. 6. Saves us from earthquake. 7. Saves shipwrecked mariner. 8. Affairs in life carried on by faith; husbandman; hireling; merchant; missionary; traveller's rest; faith and works.

SECTION I.

HAVING endeavoured to show that it is our duty and privilege to have our nature changed, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to enjoy an evidence of our acceptance with God, we will now speak of

the condition, or means, by which this work is carried on in the heart of the believer.

God has never promised pardon to the impenitent; but at the same time it must not be forgotten that faith is the hinge on which our salvation turns. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." A degree of faith is inseparably connected with true repentance. If we do not believe the promises and threatenings contained in God's Word, we remain impenitent.

Some divines attempt to draw a line of distinction between *faith* and *believing*. I once heard a burly ecclesiastic say, "*Faith* is the gift of God, and *belief* the act of the creature." After a considerably laboured metaphysical disquisition, striving to split the hair; the conclusion was, that if a man has faith he believes, and if he believes he has faith.

In a scriptural sense, to *believe* is to receive, depend, and rely upon Christ for life and salvation. Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His name." Also the Divine command is, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper."

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and "whosoever believeth" on Christ shall "not perish, but have eternal life." Our Saviour said to the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Now, if he that believeth be saved; and if faith is the condition of our justification and salvation, then faith and believing must be synonymous, in a theological sense. And if we search in the English language for the definition of these two words, we will find that the active verb *believe* signifies "to credit, trust, or think true;" and the substantive *faith* signifies about the same; for it implies belief, fidelity, confidence, &c.: therefore, if we have faith, we are not unbelievers; and if we are believers, we have faith.

SECTION II.

The question still remains,—Is faith the gift of God, or is it the act of the creature? This is disputed ground. Some say, faith is the gift of God, because it has been the burden of the prayers of the righteous, ever since the world was made, for the Lord to *give* an increase of faith; from this it is inferred that faith is the gift of God.

Then, on the other hand, it is written,

that Abraham believed in the Lord, "and He counted it to him for righteousness." And also, just before our Saviour ascended to His native heavens, He declared that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." From this, it appears evident, that a lack of faith, or unbelief, is a sin; and, if so, it must be the act of the creature; or why does God hold us responsible for our lack of faith, or unbelief?

In order to reconcile this apparent difficulty, it is necessary to inquire first, What is implied in *Justifying Faith*? This faith we conceive to be a saving grace, wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby we receive Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel, to be our Prophet, Priest, and King; trust in and rely upon Him and His righteousness alone for justification and salvation. Now, if this be what is implied in *faith*, the next question is, What is necessary to constitute this *faith*?

We answer: First, a revelation is necessary. Before we can exercise our mind, and judge in a case, and believe or disbelieve, as the case may be, it is absolutely necessary that the circumstances be revealed to us. We neither believe nor disbelieve, in a case we know nothing of. The

facts of a case must be revealed to us, before we can judge of its merits, and believe or not believe, as circumstances in the case may be. Therefore, the first thing necessary to constitute faith is a *revelation*. This God has given us in His revealed truth. In His Word, Christ is set forth before us, the propitiation for our sins; and He is revealed in the Holy Scriptures as our Prophet, Priest, and King. In a word, the *Bible* is God's revealed will to man. And if it is a revelation, it may be understood. To suppose a revelation not to be understood, is a contradiction in terms.

The next thing necessary to constitute faith is, a capacity or ability to understand the revelation made. God has not only given to us His holy Word to peruse, but has also given us a capacity, that we may learn to read and understand it. Some passages of Scripture may be considered hard to be understood; that is, unless read in the same spirit in which they were written: but the most important parts of the Holy Scriptures are the most easily understood. Some people are always wishing to plunge in the deep to bring up hidden mysteries of God; and are always puzzling their brains to solve theological problems, while their hearts, perhaps, still

remain unrenewed by grace. But of him who walks in the highway of holiness, it is said, "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

The artless and devout Christian is generally better pleased with the little pebbles he finds in the shallow brook in which he wades, than the adventurer in theology who is always plunging in the deep for coral rock or precious gems.

We would not wish to be understood as opposed to the Christian searching into the mysteries of godliness; for the things that were hid from ages, and from generations, are now "made manifest to His saints." When the seventy disciples, whom our Saviour sent out "two and two" into every city and place, as "lambs amongst wolves," to heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God, returned to Him, they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name;" and our Saviour said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

God has not only given us a revelation,—His revealed will, as contained in the Holy Scriptures; but also a capacity to read it,

and ability to fully understand and comprehend all that is necessary to make us wise unto salvation, useful in our day and generation, and happy in life, death, and throughout the countless ages of eternity.

The next thing necessary to constitute faith is a willingness to believe God's revealed will. It is not every fact revealed to us, that we believe. Nor does it follow, that we believe every fact that we understand and fully comprehend as it is revealed. After we comprehend a fact, as it is revealed, and understand all the circumstances connected with it; then there must be a willingness on our part to embrace its truths, or we still remain in unbelief.

"Convince a man against his will,
He's of the same opinion still."

Now, why do we believe the truth of God's revealed will? Is it natural for our corrupt and depraved nature to believe the truth of God's Word? The unregenerated heart, the carnal mind, is prone to deride and doubt the truth of God's holy Word. Then, if we believe His Word, it is because He mercifully inclines us to do so. Every insinuation of Satan inclines us to doubt the truths of heaven. And if we are saved from doubts, it is only because God in His abounding mercy inclines us to believe His truth.

In this respect God gives us faith ; that is, He gives us a revelation, His revealed will, as contained in His holy Word : and He gives us a capacity or ability to read and understand it ; and, also, He gives us an inclination to embrace the truth of His Word. That is, if we do believe the truth as it is in Jesus, it is because He mercifully inclines our poor unbelieving minds to believe the truth of Divine revelation. Thus God is the Author of our faith, in that He gives us all that is necessary to constitute faith. But faith is not yet complete. St. James says, " Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." " Faith without works is dead." Therefore, that faith may be complete,—a living, active principle within, we are to be co-workers with God ; for the Apostle Paul says, " Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Our feet are the gifts of God ; but we are not to suppose God will compel us to walk. It is by an act of our own mind we move our foot or hand. If the God of nature had not given us feet, a desire, or even an effort, to walk would be of no avail. And now, the God of nature having given us feet,

still, if we are too indolent or too obstinate to move our feet, we may remain as if we had no feet at all.

Also, the God of nature has given us eyes, but if we choose to grope in the dark, we are not to suppose God will violate His own law, destroy the free or moral agency of man, and compel us to open our eyes and see. If God has given us organs of sight, and ability to use them, it is by an act of our own mind we open our eyes and behold surrounding objects. But if we choose darkness, no doubt God will permit us, by an act of our mind, to close our eyes, and keep them closed. Or, to do as it is said some of the followers of Mahomet did, when they came in sight of his tomb, they plucked the eyes out of their own head.

Now, to be benefitted by the organs of sight, we must use them as God has given us ability; and so with every gift of Providence bestowed upon us, we must be co-workers with God, in the consummation of our own happiness, and in the promotion of His glory.

And it is the same in all spiritual matters: God has given us everything to make us useful, secure our own happiness, and promote His glory; but if we neglect or refuse to improve that grace, and the

innumerable blessings bestowed upon us, we may remain useless in life, miserable in death, and be exposed to God's wrath eternally.

Therefore we conclude that faith is not the gift of God, abstract from the act of the creature. Nor is it the act of the creature, abstract from the gift of God : but it is the gift of God, and the act of the creature. That is, God gives us the *materials*, and we use them according to the ability and power He has given us, and the work is complete.

SECTION III.

Faith, which is the condition of our justification, is a principle actuated by a Divine conviction. Or, in other words, it is the seed of spiritual life sown in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which inclines us to obedience in life and conversation. The Apostle Paul calls faith "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;" assuring us not only of the reality, but of the worth, of eternal and invisible things.

Faith "produces a satisfaction and assured confidence, that God will assuredly perform what He has promised, whereby the believer is as confident of them, as if they were before his eyes, and in his actual pos-

session." Believing in the essential supreme perfections of God, we have a firm and immutable foundation of faith. To contemplate His unerring knowledge, His infinite goodness and almighty power, our love to Him will be increased, our affiance confirmed, and our hearts more and more inclined to live in obedience to all the Divine commands.

Faith is the means through which grace is communicated to the heart of the penitent. The Apostle Paul says, "By grace are ye saved through faith," by which we are made partakers of the blessings of the new covenant. This faith "works by love," and is not an idle, inactive, and inoperative grace, but manifests itself by producing in us love to God and our neighbour. It also increases in us a spirit of devotion, prayer, and praise.

Faith in the heart of the believer is like a stone cast in the centre of a pond; at first its surface appears smooth, without a ripple upon its unagitated bosom; but a stone is cast into its centre, and a wake immediately appears,—a circle rises and rolls from the centre; another, and then another, in true circles, rise in quick succession and roll from the centre, till the whole surface of the pond is in motion.

In like manner, faith in the heart of the Christian, being an active principle, moves us to action and effort in devotion. It influences us to pray for ourselves, our neighbours, and all our fellow-creatures. In the first circle we place our nearest relatives,—a bosom friend, a parent, a child, a brother, or a sister. Then in another we place our more remote relatives; in another circle we place our neighbours; and after that, we may fill up all the other circles with pagans, Mahometans, Jews, and Gentiles, of every grade and condition of the human family. Faith will influence and enable us to pray for the first, for the second, and for all the rest.

SECTION IV.

Through faith the mind is enlightened, and the sinner sees the magnitude of his crimes. He sees his sins defiling to his soul, and offensive to his Maker. And now he begins to feel the awful consequence of sin, as a disease and burden to his soul; and is situated something like a man seized with a virulent disease in body. He is full of pain from head to foot. Every part of his whole system is racked and tortured. He writhes upon his bed of agony. Death begins to feel for the threads of life. He

knows without medical aid he will soon gather up his feet in death, and at best he sees but little hope of recovery. But, without aid, the last gleam of hope is gone. Resolved to make the best of his case, he calls for a physician ; a remedy is applied ; it proves effectual, and the sick is soon convalescent.

Sin is the disease of the soul. The Psalmist said, "O Lord, heal my soul : for I have sinned against Thee." Sin produces guilt and pain ; and when by faith the torch is lighted up in the town of man's soul, he sees and feels his sins a dreadful burden. And as the light continues to break forth upon him through faith, he more clearly sees his danger, and more keenly feels his awful condition. He feels his guilt a load too intolerable to be borne, and is almost ready to resign himself to the arms of despair. There appears to be but one step between his trembling soul and eternal death. And while he confers with flesh and blood, he sees no way to escape "the wrath to come." But there is hope in Christ. He calls on the Great Physician of souls. By faith the sprinkled blood is applied. It speaks better things than the blood of Abel. By faith the true penitent claims the promises, and feels the healing balm from heaven poured

into his soul, and the sinner lives. What a mercy!

SECTION V.

Suppose a traveller to miss his way, and wander over some barren waste, or through some dangerous and dreary forest, and, while dejected and forlorn, to add to his distress, the clouds begin to gather in thick darkness around the sky, and the forked lightning dashes through the air, mixed with the hoarse peals of thunder tumbling about as if the world was coming to an end. A storm gathers, and is ready to break upon him, and he is without a shelter. But in this dreadful hour of fear and danger, how welcome would be the appearance of a kind and certain guide, to lead him to a comfortable home,—a safe retreat!

In like manner, faith opens our understanding, and enables us to see our lost condition, roaming over the barren waste of sin, or entangled in a dreary wilderness, faint and forlorn. And when by faith the mind becomes truly enlightened and awakened, the sinner sees the lightning and hears the thunder from Sinai's Mount, as in the day when the Lord came "down in the sight of all the people," and the fearful presence of God was upon Mount Sinai,

and the mountain "was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly," when the God of Israel gave the people His law.

This violated and broken law thunders in the ear of the sinner, and his heart is made to quake greatly. Fear takes hold upon him. But by faith he takes hold of the promises in God's word, ventures his all on the atonement of Christ. The Rock that was cleft takes him in. The impending storm of wrath passes over. The poor sinner finds a safe retreat; saved from all fear that hath torment; approaches a throne of grace; and at last ascends to a throne in glory. Hallelujah.

SECTION VI.

How dreadful is the condition of the sinner without faith or hope! Many ills stand in his lot in life. Many dangers await him. He is in jeopardy every hour. Awful indeed is the state of a man in the midst of an earthquake which rocks the earth, shakes down the most firmly constructed and stately castles; tumbles villages, towns, and cities in heaps of ruin, burying the inhabitants beneath the fragments, or throwing them

involuntarily prostrate upon the earth, without help or hope. So it is with the poor sinner, without protection, and destitute of the favour of God.

When the unregenerated in heart is awakened, and his mind though but partially enlightened, he begins to see the extent and obligation of the Divine law ; and, standing condemned at the bar of consciousness, he begins to tremble. All his imaginary castles are crumbled into dust, shaken down as by an earthquake, and tumbled into heaps of ruin. Every false hope, every false prop, is shaken into fragments ; and the poor penitent falls prostrate before the Lord ; and his cry is, " Save, Lord, or I perish—I die !" By faith he looks up to the great Redeemer of the world, and is saved from ruin and death.

SECTION VII.

The sea of life over which we must pass is tempestuous and changing. In the course of our voyage we have many storms to encounter. Disasters await us continually. Life upon the whole is a chequered scene, and our hearts are often the abode of fear. Often, when least expected, a tempest may burst upon us. How unenviable is the condition of a shipwrecked mariner, who, after having been dashed about on the proud

waves that roll around him, and having for a season braved the storms that raged, at last is thrown upon reef rocks, and the ship shivered to atoms! And while his comrades are washed away by the sweeping foam, and sink down into the deep; by means of a plank or broken timber from the wreck, he succeeds in reaching the shore of some desolate island. He is now an exile. He finds himself surrounded by the wide-spread ocean, alone, and without hope of means for subsistence. With deepest anxiety he looks for a sail to afford him relief. In vain he looks to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south; until almost every gleam of hope is gone. But at length a sail appears. The signal of distress is raised. It is seen. The hand of relief is extended. The exile is brought on board, and safely conducted over the bosom of the deep, to some friendly haven, where he can tell his tale of woe, and sing his suffering o'er. So it is with the sinner; he is a shipwrecked mariner.

When the poor sinner views himself as a shipwrecked mariner, an exile, and in the open field of ruin, and the storms pelting upon him, and of himself no merit, strength, or means to escape; all human means and aid fail; he is lashed by the surging waves

that roll amidst the sea of time; the billows begin to roll over him; hope begins to fail. But at last he cries out from the deep. He looks up in *faith* to Him who said to the troubled waters of the Sea of Galilee, "*Peace*, be still: and the wind and waves obeyed Him." Now his hope is in Christ. He ventures upon the broad mercies of God, through faith in the merits of Christ, and finds a haven of sweet repose. At last he anchors in heaven's broad bay, where not a wave of trouble can roll across his peaceful breast.

SECTION VIII.

Nearly all the affairs in life are carried on by a kind of faith. We would ask, Why does the farmer break the turf, plough his fields, and sow his seed, but with the full expectation and belief of a plentiful harvest? And so it is with those who sow in righteousness: they believe they shall in mercy reap a plentiful harvest in the world to come.

And why does the hireling agree with and labour for his employer, but for the prospect of receiving wages, the fruit of his toil? The servant of God has a rich provision here to sustain him amidst his toils in this life. But through faith he looks to the recompence of rewards. He believes he

shall have a more glorious reward hereafter, —a crown, a weight, a world of glory.

And why does the merchant leave the wife of his bosom, and the embrace of an affectionate family, together with all the endearing comforts of the domestic circle, and pleasures connected with an inviting home ; and in the midst of peril brave the ragings of the sea, bound to a foreign land in search of costly merchandise, but to replenish his store, and increase his wealth ? In like manner the Christian, through faith, lays up a store in heaven, believing he will yet possess and enjoy it. There remaineth a reward to the righteous, and he has faith in the promise.

Again we ask, Why does the Missionary of the Cross go forth as a flaming herald of salvation to different climes, exposed to many hardships and dangers, both by sea and by land, to thrill the tones of redeeming mercy to dying men, and tell of the dreadful scenes of Mount Calvary, relate the story of the Cross, and proclaim a risen Saviour ? Is it not in prospect of the reward ? Not only in securing his own salvation, but in glorifying God, by being instrumental in bringing many from darkness to light, and from the bondage of sin, to become the sons and daughters of the Most High. The promise

is that, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Though the labours of the Missionary may be arduous, the reward is no less certain than it is illustrious, and faith claims it. The promise will not, cannot fail.

Faith being a living, active principle, it inspires us with confidence in the promises of God; therefore the true believer comes in the church of Christ as a ship comes into harbour, with a fresh breeze, and all her sails spread,—she comes in finely!

As a home is to a traveller, so are the promises of God to the weary and heavy laden, the burdened but believing soul. The Lord has promised to be "a dwelling-place to His people in all generations." And He has invited the "weary and heavy laden" to come unto Him, and He will in no wise cast them out.

When the traveller would retire, weary and faint, after a long and tedious journey, he desires to repose on a couch for rest. In like manner, when the Christian, after toiling in the service of God, through the weakness of the flesh, becomes weary and faint; but by faith he throws his whole soul upon the promises of God, trusting in the merits

of Christ, and reclining his head on the pillow of peace; bless God, he rests right well!

St. James says, "Faith without works is dead." Faith being a burning, living principle, it produces good works; but good works without faith are supposed to partake of the nature of sin.

A good exposition of the connexion between faith and works may be found in the following lines:—

FAITH AND WORKS.

Good Dan and Jane were man and wife,
And lived a loving kind of life;
One point, however, they disputed,
And each in turn his mate confuted.
'T was faith and works,—this knotty question
They found not easy of digestion.
While Dan alone for faith contended,
Jane equally good works defended.
"They are not Christians, sure, but Turks,
Who build on faith, and not on works,"
Quoth Jane; while eager Dan replied,
"By none but heathen faith's denied.
I'll tell you, wife," at length quoth Dan,
"A story of a right good man,
A patriarch sage of ancient days,
A man of faith, whom all must praise.
In his own country he possess'd
Whate'er can make a wise man blest;
His was the flock, the field, the spring,—
In short, a little rural king.
Yet, pleased, he quits his native land,
By faith in the Divine command;

God bade him go, and he, content,
Went forth, not knowing where he went.
He trusted in the promise made,
And undisputing straight obeyed.
The heavenly word he did not doubt,
But proved his faith by going out."

Jane answered, with some little pride,
"I 've an example on my side;
And, though my tale be somewhat longer,
I trust you 'll find it vastly stronger.
I 'll tell you, Daniel, of a man,
The holiest since the world began,
Who now God's favour is receiving,
For prompt *obeying*, not *believing*.
One only son this man possess'd,
In whom his righteous age was bless'd;
And more to mark the grace of heaven,
This son by miracle was given;
And from this child the Word Divine
Had promised an illustrious line.
When, lo! at once a voice he hears,
Which sounds like thunder in his ears;
God says, 'Go, sacrifice thy son!'
'This moment, Lord, it shall be done.'
He goes; and instantly prepares
To slay this child of many prayers.
Now, here you see the grand expedience
Of *works*, of actual, sound *obedience*.
This was not *faith*, but act and deed;
The Lord commands, the child shall bleed.
Thus Abraham *acted*," Jenny cried.
"Thus Abraham *trusted*," Dan replied.
"Abraham?" quoth Jane, "why that 's my man."
"No; Abraham 's him I mean," says Dan.
"He stands a monument of *faith*;"—
"No, 't is for *works* the Scripture saith."

"'T is for his faith that I defend him."
"'T is for obedience I commend him."
Thus he—thus she—both warmly feel,
And lose their temper in their zeal ;
Too quick each other's choice to blame,
They did not see each meant the same.
At length, "Good wife," said honest Dan,
"We're talking of the self-same man.
The works you praise, I own, indeed,
Grow from that faith for which I plead ;
And Abraham, whom for faith I quote,
For works deserves a special note.
'T is not enough of faith to *talk*,
A man of God with God must walk ;
Our doctrines are at last the same,
They only differ in the name.
The faith I fight for is the root ;
The works you value are the fruit.
How shall you know my creed 's sincere
Unless in works my faith appear ?
How shall I know a tree 's alive,
Unless I see it bear and thrive ?
Your works not growing on my root
Would prove they were not genuine fruit.
If faith produced no works, I see
That faith is not a living tree.
Thus faith and works together grow,
No sep'rate life they e'er can know ;
They 're soul and body, hand and heart ;
'What God hath join'd let no man part.'"

CHAPTER VII.

NATURE OF A VOW.

1. Duty to observe God's law; bind ourselves by solemn resolution.
2. Bound by baptismal vow, and Lord's Supper.
3. God's right to command; our duty to obey.
4. The nature of a vow.
5. How temptations may be repelled.
6. Necessity of reflection, &c.; to glorify God; adorn our profession.
7. How covenant made; means by which fulfilled; how to make effort and come through.
8. Resolution to be made according to covenant of grace.

SECTION I.

HAVING endeavoured in the last chapter to show what we conceive to be implied in faith in God; and the effect faith as an active and living principle produces upon the true believer; it remains now to speak of our obligation, through faith, to observe God's law and keep His "righteous judgments." The Psalmist said, "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments." This solemn promise was to keep the commandments, statutes, or judgments of God, which are most holy, just, and good.

The form of this promise is expressed in a vow, or promissory oath,—“I have sworn it.”

King David manifested a firmness and consistency, in adhering to his choice, and in the performance of his solemn promise. He was so far from retracting what he had promised, being fully persuaded it was both just and reasonable, he confirmed it, and bound himself by an oath, urging upon himself the dutiful sense of his engagement. And so should we; what was his resolution, profession, and promise should be ours, *namely*, that we will by grace, through faith, observe and do whatever God in His word commands us.

It is our duty to bind ourselves by solemn resolutions, promises, and vows, to observe all the commandments of God, so far as belongs to us individually in the place or station in life we severally occupy.

We say *all* the commandments of God, because they are all reasonable, holy, just, and good; not only good in themselves, but positively good for us to observe. St. Paul says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

We said, so far as belongs to us in our place or station in life, for a child is not bound to take upon him the office and duty of a parent; nor a servant that of a master. But every one of us should learn, study carefully, and wisely consider our obligations

to keep God's holy law, as the professed followers of Christ, in every station, and in every condition in life in which we as Christians may be placed ; and having done so, it is our duty to bind ourselves by solemn resolutions, promises, and vows to perform accordingly.

That this is our duty appears from the command and will of God, and our relation to Him, and dependence upon Him. He has given laws to direct and regulate us in all our walks through life, and has denounced all those cursed, who "continue not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them."

And in His great mercy, because we are sinners, He has commanded us to repent and believe. "The times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men every where to repent ; because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." God commands all who know and hear of Jesus Christ, to believe in Him, receive Him in the offices He sustained in completing the work of our redemption, follow His examples, love one another as He loved us, and

live according to His doctrines and statutes. For "this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment."

The laws of our Great Creator directly and immediately bind our conscience as soon as we gain a knowledge of them: therefore it is our duty by purposes, promises, and voluntary engagements, to urge and quicken ourselves to a lively sense and diligent performance of our duty; and that too, which is our duty whether we consent to it or not. To neglect to urge, and bind ourselves to conformity to the laws of God, is to slight His authority, and rebel against Him.

SECTION II.

By our baptism, by our prayers, and by our attendance upon the worship and ordinances of God, we as Christians are solemnly engaged, and should resolve, promise, and *vow* to serve the Lord.

God not only commands us to accept the covenant of grace, but to submit to the seals and rites by which it is confirmed; and this submission of ours implies a solemn obligation to be for the Lord, and serve Him.

Baptism is a sacramental vow, or oath of allegiance to God; and therefore St. Peter

calls it "the answer of a conscience towards God;" an answer to God's demand in the Gospel, to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; and accept of Christ, and walk in His ways.

By our baptism we are justly constructed as answering and promising to do so. That this engagement may not be forgotten, it is renewed at the Lord's Supper, where we engage again and again most solemnly, by the public rites that are there used, to stand to our covenant and perform it.

There is also a resolution, promise, or vow expressed or implied in every prayer to God; and in every approach we make to Him, in attending upon the worship and ordinances of His house. Indeed, our joining with the assemblies of God's people in public worship is emphatically a declaration and profession that we will serve the Lord, and obey His voice. And if we do not, we deal deceitfully by professing one thing and practising another. Upon the whole, it is plainly and positively our duty to resolve, promise, and bind ourselves by vows to keep the commands of God, and then to pay our vows to Him.

God has graciously promised to be our God: therefore it appears to be right and reasonable that we make a suitable return

on our part, by hearty resolutions, faithful promises and solemn declarations and engagements to Him, that we will be His. It is but a proper testimony of our love to Him and His service, to put ourselves under the strictest and most sacred bonds we can, to keep His most righteous laws. This is according to the approved example of the saints of old, who engaged themselves both publicly and privately to serve the Lord.

SECTION III.

The sincere Christian having vowed and solemnly engaged to keep God's commandments, he should without reserve perform his promise, because, though we had never formally resolved, promised, or vowed, we are nevertheless under obligations to God to keep all His commands.

There are some duties that depend upon our own consent. But there are other duties concerning the performance of which we are not left to choose. God's right over us as His creatures is valid, whether we acknowledge it or not. A natural relation infers, and in some instances enforces, duty, though there be no consent. For instance, a father is a father, whether the child own him in that relation or not; and, as a father, he has a right to command his child. Upon

this principle, God has an absolute and unlimited right to demand our services, our souls, our bodies; all that we are, and all that we can do. In His word it is written, "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and judgments. I am the Lord."

By our own consent to the covenant of grace, whereby we acknowledge and choose God for our God, we are bound to abide by our consent, and perform our engagements.

The reasons and motives that induced us at first to make a promise or vow, should engage us to perform it. After trial we will find no just cause to repent of our promises and resolutions, for God is always the same. As He ever was, He always will be, and His commands are ever the same; all holy, just, and good, and profitable to all who observe them. If we meet with any change in our outward condition, any new impediments, opposition, or discouragement, that we were not aware of when we first engaged, it was our want of due consideration and forethought; or, in other words, not having properly counted the cost. One of the great and fundamental lessons taught in the Bible is, (as our Saviour said,) "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Our vows should be so deliberate and voluntary as not to need any inquiry after them. King Solomon says, "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry." Being bound by vows and promises, we should take our lot in life at all hazards, and perform our vows to God, let it cost what it may; for if we fulfil on our part, the reward is certain; His promise cannot fail.

SECTION IV.

Now let us consider the nature of such solemn engagements. They have more in them than is contained in a single promise. In every solemn dedication or appearance before God in the ordinances of His house, there is an attestation, or calling upon God to be witness and judge, as well as a party in the case. In a word, it implies a virtual imprecation upon ourselves.

A solemn attestation and appeal to God, concerning the seriousness and honesty of our intention to perform, and to judge us if we do not, is another consideration that should prompt us to be careful to pay our vows to the Lord.

There is a virtual imprecation of all the curses of a broken law and covenant upon

ourselves, if we do not unfeignedly, throughout the whole course of our life, endeavour to fulfil our promises and sacramental engagements. Those who are not careful to live answerable to the obligation and end of their baptismal vow, and all those who eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's table, virtually imprecate condemnation upon themselves. Because these solemn rites used not only confirm the promises, but also the threatenings.

The receiving of these rites implies an invocation of a blessing in case of unfeigned endeavours to perform the will of God; so the receiving of them implies the imprecation of a curse, if we be not careful to fulfil, as well as we can, the duties of the covenant.

Herein life and death, blessing and cursing, are set before us; and one of them must be our portion. God said to His ancient people, the Jews: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil: in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

“But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” Thus being most solemnly engaged, we are morally and legally bound to perform.

SECTION V.

It is necessary to inculcate and urge upon ourselves a deep sense of our duty and obligations to perform our vows to God, because of the weakness, frailty, wavering, and instability of our nature; and especially when assaulted and pursued with temptations. We who know, or may know, from experience, that we are weak, wavering, and unstable in the way to heaven, cannot pursue a better course to confirm ourselves than to reflect frequently and seriously upon the solemnity and reasonableness of our engagements to be for the Lord, and the awful danger of drawing back. This should

prompt us to renew firm purposes and determinations to *cleave* to the Lord. When this is done with humble dependence on our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Intercessor, we obtain strengthening and comforting grace from God. And while we maintain such a disposition as this, and continue to rely on Christ, as the only hope set before us, temptations from without will make no impression upon us within : for if Christ be formed within, in humble reliance upon *Him* all temptations may easily be repelled.

But if we be not careful to restrain and guard against the *fickleness* and weakness of our hearts, Satan will assault hard, and may ultimately prevail. Our only chance is to bar the heart at once against every evil thought ; if we indulge one, others will immediately follow. If you allow one thief to enter your house, he will let in all the rest, and your goods will be spoiled. When the tempter comes in like a flood, there is no time for *parley* ; the door of the heart must be closed against him at once. If the Christian begins to reason the case with the devil, he is more than half conquered in the outset, and the tempter will *surely* prevail. Then all our good wishes and old purposes will soon come to nothing, and we may soon find ourselves standing in the open field of

ruin, without help or hope. But in humble reliance upon our great Redeemer and Intercessor, we may be strengthened, and through Him vanquish every spiritual foe, and come off more than conquerors at last.

SECTION VI.

If we do not renew and urge upon ourselves a lively sense of our engagements to duty, our practice of obedience will become more and more remiss. By degrees we lose our zeal for God, and become an easy prey to our own lusts. Nothing tends more to keep the heart in a state of holy tenderness than the lively presence of truth and a sense of duty.

When we can bring our knowledge to act, and have it for use on all occasions, it will urge us to practice: then, as St. James says, "being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work," we shall be blessed in the deed.

Many of our sins are occasioned by forgetfulness and want of consideration. Peter would not have ventured as he did, had he remembered his Master's prediction. When he remembered he wept bitterly. Forgetfulness of duty, and of former resolutions, is the occasion of much mischief to the soul. If we would reap the benefit of these

due reflections and considerations, let us, on every occasion and opportunity, accustom ourselves to call them to mind, that we may become firmly and habitually resolved to know and do the will of God ; which will tend to quicken us to more seriousness and diligence in keeping His righteous judgments.

No one can deny but it is our duty to bind ourselves by solemn resolutions, promises, and vows, to observe and do whatever God in His word commands us. And having engaged and vowed to do what He commands, we should be careful to perform according to our vows. It is necessary, and also profitable, for us to inculcate and urge upon ourselves a sense of our duty and obligations to observe God's righteous laws.

The reasons and motives that influenced us at first to make a promise or vow to serve the Lord, should engage us to keep it, whatever temptations or trials may occur to divert us. This is the way to please and glorify God, and adorn the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SECTION VII.

A word to those who have hitherto neglected to resolve and promise, or to engage themselves formally and expressly to fear

and serve the Lord. Delay no longer, but engage yourselves with judgment and hearty affection to fear and serve the Lord; for true religion is indispensable to eternal happiness. And there can be no true religion, nor practical godliness, without firm resolutions and unfeigned promises to serve the Lord. True religion recommends itself to the heart and conscience of every man, saint or sinner, though thousands neglect and repudiate it.

After we come to the years of discretion, unless we formally and expressly consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and bind ourselves to serve the Lord with the whole heart and soul, we have no actual right to that covenant, no personal interest in it.

The obligations and the relations of a covenant are mutual; and if we do not fully consent and come up to the terms, we have no reason to reckon that God is pleased with us; but that we are under guilt and the power of sin, and, in that case, have no right to eternal life; and that all who live and die in that state shall not see life, for the wrath of God will abide upon them for ever and ever.

But some may say, "Why should I promise, seeing it is not in my power to per-

form? Is it not better to not promise, than to promise and not perform?" This may be easily answered. It is really our duty to love and serve the Lord, whether we resolve and promise or not; and it is not only our duty to keep the law of God, but to promise and vow, as a sanctified means to stir us up to duty, and bind us more strongly to obedience. But such promises and vows are always to be made in humble dependence upon the power of God's grace, and interpreted as made according to the meaning of the new covenant, which gives strength to perform what it requires.

Impossibilities are not required of man; and though we are weak, and have no power of our own to do good, nevertheless, if we *please* to be good, we may be as good as we please; for we have the means, and if we use the means, God will give the power. The man with the withered arm was commanded to stretch it forth, though it was powerless;—what of that? In making the effort it came up whole as the other.

If God in His word should command us to march through a stone wall, it would be our business to go at it; but it would be His business to bring us through. We cannot do His work, and He will not do ours. We are to make the effort, in humble de-

pendence on His promises, and He will crown the effort with success ; therefore we are commanded to “work out *our* own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in *us* both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.”

SECTION VIII.

Our errors in judgment, infirmities, and manifold failings do not make void our good resolutions, nor our covenant relation to God, provided we sincerely repent, and become more humble and watchful, more ashamed of ourselves, more afraid of our weakness, more earnest to renew our former resolutions, and more careful to depend and wait upon God for grace to perform what He requires.

The covenant of grace promises and secures pardon to every true penitent ; but if we do not promise and bind ourselves according to this covenant, we are under the condemning power of the Law, which curseth every one that continueth not in all things that are written therein to do them.

Therefore we should heartily, deliberately, and firmly resolve to serve the Lord, with full purpose of the whole heart and soul ; and serve Him without exception or reservation, for the present, and from henceforth,

and for ever. The people of God may change their place of abode, but not their employment.

All our resolutions, promises, and vows should be according to the covenant of grace. Not in confidence of our own strength, nor to establish our own righteousness; but in humble dependence upon the grace and strength of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And then shall we triumph. Christ helping us, we shall be well able to go up and possess the goodly land. Hallelujah!

CHAPTER VIII.

SUFFERING OF CHRIST.

1. St. Paul's defence against insinuations; trust in atonement; apostle glories in cross. 2. What implied in cross; Christ laid down His life; His death not caused by crucifixion; apparent discrepancies between St. Mark and St. John; design in creation thwarted; necessary for Christ to undertake our cause; His agony. 3. Death of Christ not from natural cause; attributes of God harmonized; not necessary for Jews to crucify Christ. 4. Cross implies Gospel; divinity of Christ; prophecies fulfilled; song in glory, &c.

SECTION I.

I HAVE just been reading with great attention St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. It appears to have been written with his own hand, while at Rome; and addressed to the whole country of Asia Minor, where he had laboured with great success, in extending Christianity among his Galatian brethren, who appear to have readily embraced the truths of the Gospel. But after Paul left Galatia, to preach the Gospel in other parts, certain false teachers came among them, and endeavoured to

blend Judaism and Christianity, saying that it was necessary for all who believe in Christ to be circumcised, and attend to other ceremonies of the Law of Moses, in order to be saved. To give their doctrine currency, they even asserted that Paul also believed, and sometimes preached, this doctrine. Such errors were subversive to the spiritual interests of the Galatians; therefore the apostle defends himself from the false insinuation. He refers to those who troubled them with this false doctrine, and who would, if possible, "pervert the Gospel of Christ;" and then declares that "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

The apostle clearly shows to the Jews, that, in Christ, the ceremonies of the Law were abolished, and that, since Jesus Christ had suffered on Mount Calvary, to atone for our sins, and rose for our justification, both Jew and Gentile are saved through faith in His blood. He assured his brethren, that to be circumcised, they became debtors to do the whole Law; and that, in such case, Christ would profit them nothing. He affirmed that whosoever attempted justification by the Law, falls from grace.

After which he adds, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased." Many of the Jews who professed faith in Christ, were unwilling to risk their salvation entirely on the merits of His sufferings and death; and hence they continued to cling to the ceremonies of the Law, but the apostle, in full belief of the doctrine he preached, had no fear or doubt of the efficacy of the atonement that was made. If he had possessed a thousand souls, he evidently would have ventured them all on the atonement of Christ, for whom he was willing to suffer all things, knowing that "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

The apostle gloried in preaching Christ crucified, and urged upon Jews and Gentiles the necessity of faith in Him who died upon the cross to retrieve the affairs of the whole world. Finally he exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

"The cross it takes our guilt away,
It holds our fainting spirits up,
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,
And sweetens every bitter cup.

It makes the coward spirit brave,
 It nerves the feeble arm to fight ;
 It takes all horror from the grave,
 And gilds the bed of death with light.

The balm of pain, the cure of woe,
 The measure and the pledge of love,
 'T is all that sinners want below,
 'T is all that angels know above."

SECTION II.

The cross of Christ not only implies the wooden cross on which He suffered on Mount Calvary ; but it implies all the unutterable agonies He endured upon the cross, which were infinitely more than any mere mortal could endure.

In order that we may form correct views of the extent of the atonement, it is necessary that we have adequate conceptions of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross. His sufferings in body were great ; but this does not appear to be all He endured upon the cross. Nor does it appear that He died in consequence of crucifixion, but from some other cause. It does appear that crucifixion was a circumstance, which in the Providence of God was permitted to accompany, but not cause, the death of Christ. If we suppose Christ died from crucifixion, it would appear to have been necessary

that the Jews should crucify Him. In that case, if Pilate had released Christ, instead of Barabbas, as he proposed to do, it would have frustrated the design of Providence in the redemption of the world.

While upon earth, our Saviour said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And still the Jews are legally charged with the murder of Christ, because they did all in their power to accomplish their wicked purpose. No doubt they fain would have accomplished their wicked design, had not our Saviour expired from some other cause, while extended on the cross. Also, it appears evident our Saviour expired some hours sooner than the Jews had reason to expect His death from crucifixion.

From all we can gather from the Holy Scriptures, it appears that our Saviour and the two thieves were crucified precisely at the same time, which was, according to the account given by St. John, the "sixth hour of the day," answering to twelve o'clock (or noon). This was according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time in all matters of labour. In the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, it is stated that "it

was about the sixth hour" when the Jews before Pilate "cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him;" and that then Pilate delivered Him up to "be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away." And then it is added in the eighteenth verse, "they crucified Him." Now, from this it appears that our Saviour was nailed to the cross about mid-day. St. John says, "about the sixth hour," which may have been a little before noon, when He was delivered up; and about mid-day, or soon after, when He was nailed to the cross, on which He languished until the ninth hour, (or three in the afternoon,) when He expired. This agrees with the account given by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Though neither of them state the precise time our Saviour was nailed to the cross, they both speak of the darkness that prevailed from the sixth to the ninth hour, during which time our Saviour was extended on the cross.

But St. Mark says, "And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." The Jews not only divided the day into six equal parts, in all matters of labour, counting from sunrise or six in the morning till six in the evening, as appears from what is stated in the twentieth chapter of the

Gospel by St. Matthew, where we have an account of the householder going out to hire labourers into his vineyard. He went out at the first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours of the day. In this case the "sixth hour of the day" answers to twelve o'clock, or noon. But the Jews, for municipal purposes, also divided the days and nights into four equal parts of three hours each, which they reckoned from six o'clock every evening and morning. These portions of three hours each, the watchmen called watches of the day and watches of the night, counting the watches of the day from six in the morning, numbering the first, second, third, and fourth watches of the day.

Now, if St. Mark alludes to the division of time by counting the "watches" of the day, his "third hour" (or watch) and John's "sixth hour" agree in fixing the time of the crucifixion at noon, which evidently may be the case; but that Mark, in this instance, refers to the "watches of the day" instead of the "hours of the day," I believe, does not clearly appear from the construction of the sentence in the original text.

But it may be that St. Mark here refers to the assembling of the Sanhedrim, which

met at nine in the forenoon, which was the "third hour of the day;" and though he states in the same verse, "And they crucified Him," this may refer to a subsequent period. Or still we may take another view of the subject. The "third hour of the day" commenced at nine, and continued till twelve. If our Saviour was extended on the cross before twelve o'clock, it accounts for St. Mark calling it the "third hour," as the third hour of the day continued till noon. So that, without changing the order of the sentence, he agrees with St. John in fixing the time of the crucifixion about mid-day. Admitting this, our Saviour expired in about three hours after He was nailed to the cross.

I have before me an ancient work containing details of many interesting circumstances, the records of which are gathered from the writings of Aulus Gellius, Flavius Josephus, St. Jerome, and other ancient fathers and historians, giving an account in detail of dates and the hours of the day when our Saviour was condemned by a wicked judge, and when He was extended on the cross, and many particulars not mentioned by the Evangelists in reference to the scenes of Mount Calvary.

These ancient writers state that it was on

Friday the third day of April, at six in the morning, our Saviour was brought before Pilate, and at seven He was taken before Herod Antipas ; and at eight He was returned to Pilate, who then proposed to the Jews to release Christ. But the Jews being unwilling, at nine, which the Jews called the "third hour of the day," our Saviour was scourged, and crowned with thorns. They also state that at about ten o'clock Pontius Pilate publicly condemned Christ to be crucified, and washed his hands in token of his professed innocence, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person ;" and that about eleven o'clock (or a little after) He was nailed to the cross.

This agrees with St. Mark, who states, "It was the third hour of the day, and they crucified Him ;" for the "third hour of the day" had not yet all passed away, until noon, according to the Jewish reckoning of time.

It is also stated by these ancient writers, that about noon (the sixth hour of the day) darkness began to prevail, and continued till the ninth hour, (three o'clock in the afternoon,) when our Saviour expired on the cross ; and that it was about an hour after this, the soldier pierced His side with a Roman spear. They also state that at five

P.M., He was taken down from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and laid in the tomb. And there was a natural eclipse of the moon at six o'clock that evening.

But whatever view we take of the case, as given by the Evangelists, the fact is established that our Saviour expired much sooner than the Jews had reason to expect His death from crucifixion.

And after the sufferers had been extended on the cross a given time, in order to increase their agony and hasten their death, according to the custom of the Jews, the executioners went to break their legs and arms. But Pilate marvelled in that Christ was already died. The thieves were yet surviving. Their limbs were then broken, and a wicked soldier pierced our Saviour's side with a spear. If this wound had been inflicted before our Saviour expired, it might have been supposed by some that He died of that wound. But He was already dead.

The question now arises, Why did Christ expire upon the cross so many hours sooner than the Jews had reason to expect His death from crucifixion; and why expire so much sooner than did the thieves who shared the same fate from the hands of the

Jews ? Philosophy teaches us that there must be a cause to produce an effect. In this case there was a cause. But His death was not brought about in the ordinary course of events ;—it evidently was miraculous. The two malefactors died from crucifixion : but not so with Him who suffered “the Just for the unjust.” For if Christ had died from natural causes, we cannot conceive that His death would have atoned for the sins of the world.

It is supposed by some theologians and divines that while our Lord was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, the extreme fervour of His application to God in behalf of a sinful world was too much for His human nature to endure. “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

May we not suppose that, when our Lord prayed, saying, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done ;” He at that time began to feel the load of human guilt rolling upon Him ; and if, in answer to His prayer, the “cup” had not at that time passed from Him, He would then have expired under the weight of human guilt and woe ?

That the death of Christ, by some means, was absolutely necessary to redeem the world, is admitted; but, that it was necessary to accomplish His death by crucifixion cannot be proved. In the infinite wisdom of God, the persecutors of Christ were permitted to manifest their envy and malice by nailing Him to the cross. His crucifixion was therefore a circumstance which did actually exist, and no more.

It is one of the doctrines revealed in the New Testament, that the Son of God is the Creator of the world. That "by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

Now, as it appears, His design in our creation was defeated by the introduction of sin; there was a propriety in His interposing in our behalf. He, therefore, moved with compassion, undertook to retrieve the affairs of a world He had created with His own hands. And, as far as we can judge in these great matters, redemption was a greater work than creation; that is, it required a more powerful exertion of bene-

violence and love to recover a ruined world lying in wickedness to virtue and happiness, than to create it at first in a state of innocence.

In the work of redemption, there is a brighter display of the Divine perfections, and a greater exertion of benevolence, than was exhibited in the work of creation, when the stars of the morning "sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Now, if God, by a mere act of indemnity, had blotted out the sins of the world, without Christ suffering "the Just for the unjust," such a display of the Divine attributes would not have been given. But the Son of God, obtaining the right of our redemption, by appearing in our nature, and suffering all the punishment due to our sins, presents an unparalleled scene of love and benevolence, on which angels desire to look.

Verily, we can conceive no way by which God could have saved a ruined and guilty world, without the sufferings of Christ. For man had violated a sacred law, founded upon immutable principles of justice, given by an infinite Being; and therefore incurred infinite demerit, though he was but a finite creature.

The magnitude of an offence, for the

transgression of a law, is estimated in proportion to the power and dignity of the law-giver; without taking into account the obscurity and degradation of the violator of the law.

If a man offends against an equal, it is only an offence. The same offence, if committed against a magistrate or a judge in court, would be a crime. And the same, if committed against a king or queen, would be treason. If the magnitude of an offence is to be fairly estimated by this rule, the conclusion is, that the violation of a sacred law given by an Infinite Being, though perpetrated by a finite being,—a mere mortal,—must, in the very nature of things, incur infinite demerit.

Then, on the other hand, if by the transgression of God's holy law we have incurred infinite demerit, all the angels in heaven and saints on earth could not, by suffering, make an atonement for one sin; for finite beings cannot make an atonement of infinite merit.

If the highest arch-angel that flutters around the throne of God, or the brightest saint among all the glorified millions in heaven, could endure all the pains of the wicked on earth, and the agonizing tortures of the *lost* in hell, it would not atone for

one sin, for there would be no efficacy in such an atonement.

But Christ having obtained the right of our redemption, by taking upon Him our nature, made of the seed of Abraham, so that He could suffer as a man; then, as it is written, in Him "dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" so that while He suffered as a man, His Divinity gave efficacy to the sacrifice, and the atonement of infinite merit was complete.

But this was not to be only in theory, a mere form, but an awful reality. Christ had undertaken our cause; and as man had sinned, man must suffer the penalty of that violated law. He tasted death for every man; that is, our sins were absolutely, in effect, laid upon Him who knew no sin; and all the pain, and grief, and sorrow, and anguish, and woe, and misery, incurred by all, from first to last, from the creation of the world up to the end of time, was brought in one eternal pang, and rolled upon the spotless, trembling soul of the great Redeemer of the world, who, while extended upon the cross, realized an eternity of misery in a moment, which caused Him to faint under the intolerable load of human guilt and woe. He then said, "It is finished, and gave up the ghost."

We may feel indignant at the Jews for crucifying our Lord; but we must not forget it was our sins that caused our Saviour to bleed. Our sins pointed the thorns, and nailed Him to the tree.

SECTION III.

We therefore conclude, if Christ expired under the weight of human guilt and woe, then His death was not from any natural cause; and His sufferings were more than could be experienced, much less endured, by any mere mortal. Such was the justice of God, He could not let the sinner go unpunished; and such His mercy, that He could not see a world sink down into ruin without manifesting His love and benevolence, by devising a scheme of redemption, and giving His only begotten Son to suffer on Mount Calvary, to redeem a guilty and ruined world.

In the sufferings of Christ on the cross, all the attributes of God are harmonized and glorified. Here His holiness beams forth in all its purity; here justice blazes in all its dreadful majesty; here truth appears inviolate and eternal; here love opens its boundless and undiminished stores; here wisdom shines in all its manifold directions:—

“Here the whole Deity is known;
Nor dares the creature guess,
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice or the grace.”

That it was necessary the Jews should crucify Christ, in order to redeem the world, cannot be admitted; but “it may be acknowledged it was necessary as far as the wilful and barbarous conduct of man could make anything necessary; but this necessity did not arise out of any predetermination or decree of God, in producing those nefarious desires which led the enemies of the Lord Jesus to imbrue their hands in His blood.

“His crucifixion was undoubtedly predicted; and this prediction was founded on that infinite knowledge of Deity which enables Him to foresee all that combination of circumstances which finally conducted the crucifiers of the Lord Jesus to perpetrate their horrid deeds against Him.

“Whatever necessity, therefore, could originate from these circumstances (most of which were the effect of voluntary agents abusing their freedom) for Jesus Christ to be crucified did only exist, but that all this was essential to effect the redemption of the world by the death of Christ is more than can be proved. To admit it would

indeed be to destroy all human responsibility, and to remove all guilt from the conscience of those who perpetrated this daring crime.

“It would be to convert a crime, considered by the inspired writers of the highest magnitude, into one of the most sublime virtues, no less a virtue than contributing most essentially to the grand work of redeeming the world by the blood of Christ !

“There may be another sense in which we may admit the necessity of the crucifixion of Christ. Had not sin entered into the world, there would have been no necessity of a Redeemer, much less that He should die ; but as sin did enter into the world, ‘and death by sin,’ the order of God made it necessary that man might be rescued from its thralldom, that the Redeemer should die in man’s stead.

“Accordingly a Redeemer was provided, and His death by some means made certain : hence He is called the ‘Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ;’ that is, devoted as a vicarious sacrifice for man, by the wise determination of God from the foundation of the world. At the same time, God, from whose omniscience nothing is hid, saw what would be the state of the moral world when the Redeemer should come ; and, according

to this foresight, He fixed the plan of His own operations, determining to make even this wickedness of the wicked subserve His benevolent purpose in the great work of redemption.

"Hence originated a sort of necessity that grew out of the disordered state of the moral world,—that Jesus Christ should suffer crucifixion. But the wicked and cruel circumstances attending this barbarous act originated from malicious dispositions of His persecutors; and not from either the predetermination of God, or His exciting agency on their hearts."

"That the death of Christ was essential to effect the redemption of the world must be on all hands admitted; but it is equally plain that crucifixion was not the immediate or effecting cause of that death, but only a circumstance attending it, which could not have been avoided, but by an act of Almighty Power to destroy the free agency of His crucifiers. This will appear evident,—

"1st. From the fact that the agonies of death were felt by the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when He "poured out strong cries and tears to Him that was able to save, and was heard in that He feared;" and He doubtless would have died under the mighty load of human guilt which

He came to sustain, and to expiate, had not the cup, in answer to His prayer, been removed from Him at that time.

“2nd. In perfect accordance with the solemn declaration, in which He assumes the high prerogative of duty, it is said, that when Christ expired on the cross, “He dismissed His Spirit;” and this He did by an act of power peculiar to Himself, as Sovereign of his own actions and destiny.

“3rd. His death was miraculous; that is, it was not brought about in the ordinary course of events, as was the death of the two malefactors who were crucified with Him.

“His death was the effect of His own voluntary act, in submitting to become man’s substitute, and to receive the vindictive stroke of eternal Justice, which pierced the vital springs, and finally severed the soul from the body. From the whole it manifestly follows, that if the death of Christ was not inflicted by crucifixion, then crucifixion was not essentially necessary to accomplish the redemption of the world; but was one of those incidental circumstances attending this awful event, which arose from the wickedness of the hearts of men, but which God, who is wise and wonderful in working, overruled, and managed for the display of His infinite love.

“Allowing the correctness of these observations, it will also follow that if Christ had died a natural death, it would not have made an atonement for the sins of the world. Indeed, a natural death, to Him was impossible.

“Death is the effect and punishment of sin ; but Christ knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth ; and therefore His death was altogether supernatural ; inflicted in a way in which no other person ever experienced death, entirely peculiar to Himself, and far beyond the ordinary course of events.

“Hence it cannot be accounted for by any of the known laws of nature. Neither does it follow, by any fairness of reasoning, because we deny the crucifixion which inflicted by the barbarous conduct of His persecutors, and not by an order from God, the power of depriving Christ of life, that He must have died a natural death. As before said, His death was miraculous, or supernatural ; and could never have been effected by all the malicious ingenuity of men, had He not voluntarily submitted to the death of the cross ; and in this astonishing act He evidenced both the humanity and Divinity of His sacred character.”

SECTION IV.

The cross of Christ also implies the Gospel. The apostle says, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." That is, lest they should suffer persecution for preaching the Gospel of Christ. The word *cross* is used here instead of the word "Gospel." The cross therefore implies all the leading precepts and cardinal doctrines contained in the message of mercy, and promulgated by the preaching of the Gospel.

One of the leading doctrines contained in the Gospel is the mysterious doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, without which the whole Gospel system would be but a fabrication. But however mysterious to human reason this doctrine may appear, nevertheless, it is revealed in, and confirmed by, the Gospel. It is written, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." He is omnipresent and immutable. For, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou

fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." And again the apostle saith, " Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

That Christ has equal honour with the Father is evident ; for it is written, " That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent Him." " For as the Father hath life in Himself ; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

The Gospel also reveals to us that, in order to obtain the right of our redemption Christ verily took upon Him our nature. That is, " the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Hence, Paul to Timothy saith, " God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." " He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," and " in Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

In the cross are also implied the doctrines of future rewards and punishments, as set forth in the Gospel ; that there re-

maineth therefore a rest for the people of God, which they shall yet inherit at His right hand above.

The apostle gloried in preaching all this, which he calls the doctrine of the cross. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

That life should become subject to death, and a blessing subject to a curse, are apparent contradictions which mortal reason is prone to scorn and deride. The wisdom of the world; the wise men among the Gentiles esteemed it foolishness, and rejected the doctrine of the Cross, because it propounds doctrines of faith, and positively requires our assent from the evidence of the things themselves upon the authority of God's holy word.

The cross also implies the various doctrines and the inestimable blessings flowing from it; such as redemption through the blood of Christ; peace with God through faith in the great Redeemer, justification, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification.

Also, the cross implies taking up our cross, and following Christ, by endeavouring to imitate Him in all His imitable perfections. And to glory in the cross implies putting our trust in the Lord for grace,

wisdom, and happiness ; for, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches : but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth." It also implies triumph : "Christ helping us, we can do all things."

The apostle gloried in the cross, because he esteemed the blessings flowing from it more excellent, more durable and valuable, and more to be desired, than all the world beside.

He might have gloried in his attainments, as he was a *literator* of the day. Or he might have gloried in his birth, he was free born, "of the stock of Israel, and of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews,"—which was no small consideration among the Jews at that time. Or he might have gloried in his religion, as a Jew of the circumcision and, as touching the law, a Pharisee.

And with his advantages and attainments, no doubt, he had pleasing prospects before him, in which he might have gloried ; such as the prospect of wealth and fame. But

he counts all this but dross, and resolves to glory in nothing save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SECTION V.

We should glory in the cross of Christ, because all the prophecies referring to the promised *Messiah* in Him were fulfilled. The system of redemption intimated by the sacrifices offered by Abel, and subsequently by Abraham, were fulfilled in Christ.

The ancient prediction contained in the book of Genesis, that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," was fulfilled in Christ, in that He came as Shiloh was to come, and at the precise time and place, according to prophecy, when and where He was to appear. Also, God, by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, said, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." This was literally fulfilled in the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, whereby a fountain was opened in the house of David for sin and all uncleanness.

We should glory in the cross, because it

is the only foundation of the Christian's hope, and the only means by which the world can be evangelized. The promises of God render this certain; for it is written, "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And again it is written, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." This is also referred to in the Revelation of St. John the Divine, where he says, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we contemplate all the blessings flowing from it, and the effects the Gospel produces on the hearts of all who receive it; it affords strength to the weak, and comfort to the afflicted; it affords riches of grace to the poor in spirit, and gives support to the dying; it provides part of the reward for the righteous here, by letting down streams of glory in our midst, while on earth, and gives the best security for the rest above. In a word, the cross bears us up through all the ills in life, gives

support in death, and will be our passport to heaven. It will not only raise us to the skies, but it is the key of paradise, and will open the gates of heaven, and let us into glory.

Also, the cross of Christ forms the song of glory, sung by minstrels in heaven; saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

In conclusion, the cross of Christ is a subject of rich variety. It is a grand lineament in the plan of salvation, the invincible sanctuary of the humble, the ultimate victory of Christ, the confirmation of the faithful, and the life of the just; and is therefore a subject worthy of universal contemplation and admiration. It touches on eternity, and concerns both worlds. It involves the glory of God, the victory and honour of Christ, and the salvation of souls. It is the only remedy

against sin, the best philosophy of the wise and the good, the comfort of the afflicted, the strength of the weak, the riches of the poor, the victory and support of the dying. The Gospel gives part of the reward in hand, while we are pilgrims and sojourners here below, and the best security for the rest above. Verily, there remaineth a reward for the righteous.

CHAPTER IX.

A WONDERFUL PHENOMENON.

TIME of children of Israel's sojourn in Egypt; phenomenon; angel appeared; who he was. 2. How God manifested Himself. 3. What the burning bush is emblem of; the fire; the bush. 4. Human nature of Christ; state of Israel; church of God. 5. Moses not disobedient to call of God; we should imitate Him.

SECTION I.

It is stated in the Book of Exodus that "the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years;" but this evidently includes the whole time of Abraham's entering into the land of Canaan, to the time the children of Israel went out from the land of Egypt; for, from the time of Abraham's entry into

Canaan, up to the birth of Isaac, was twenty-five years, and Isaac was sixty years old at the birth of Jacob, and Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he went with his sons down into Egypt. He continued there with his children two hundred and fifteen years. Now all these sums added together, amount to four hundred and thirty years. The sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt, as referred to in the book of Exodus, must therefore include the whole time from Abraham's entry to in Canaan to the period of the Israelites' departure from Egypt, with their flocks and their herds. But the actual time they remained in bondage, in Egypt, was two hundred and fifteen years.

And when the God of Israel was about to put forth His hand to release His oppressed people from the yoke of Egyptian bondage, it pleased Him to grant unto Moses His servant a wonderful manifestation of His presence and power.

Moses had interfered in a conflict between an Israelite and an Egyptian; and, to escape the indignation of Pharaoh, he fled to the land of Midian, and there formed an acquaintance with the priest of Midian, and became connected with his family. The Midianites appear to have

descended from the fourth son of Abraham : and they still retained the true religion among them. But subsequently they polluted the Israelites.

Moses became a shepherd in the land of Midian ; and when he had led the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, to the back part of the wilderness, he came to Horeb, "the mountain of God ;" and there, to arrest his attention, a wonderful phenomenon was presented to his view.

The God of Israel was about to commission him to go to Pharaoh, and demand the release of his oppressed people ; and He was pleased to give him an illustrious manifestation, to rouse his attention to what He was about to speak.

It was not a midnight vision, but a scene presented to his view in the open face of day. "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

Among theologians it is a question who this angel was. The word "angel" signifies a messenger : it does not describe, or refer to, the nature of any intelligence, but to an

office, and in this case signifies a messenger, or one that is sent.

Jesus Christ is called an Angel. He was sent by His Father to publish and fulfil the conditions, and accomplish the great work of human redemption. The Angel of the Lord that appeared unto Moses in the burning bush was not a created angel, but the uncreated Angel of the Covenant; for he assumes to himself the title of "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It is admitted by divines that whenever in the Holy Scriptures one in this character is represented as speaking in the manner of God, or as Sovereign of the Church, we are to understand it as referring particularly to our great Redeemer, who is the Angel of the Covenant. He appeared to Hagar, to Abraham, and to many others, in the character of an angel.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the conditions, and executes the promise, of the covenant of grace. He is the Angel of God's presence. God, by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah, speaking of our redemption through Christ, who is represented as a mighty conqueror returning from the conquest of his enemies in great triumph, with His garments deeply dyed with the blood of the slain, and having completed a victory over the enemies of

God's people, by travailing in the greatness of His strength; it is then added, "The Angel of God's presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them."

In a word, the Messiah appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, in the midst of a bush that burned, and was not consumed.

SECTION II.

God often manifested Himself in flames of fire. For instance, when Moses brought forth the people out of the camp, to meet with the God of Israel, the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, "and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly."

Also in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, the Lord appeared unto Ezekiel, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar, and as expressed by the Prophet Ezekiel, "I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire."

In the Book of Daniel, in his vision, speaking of God's kingdom, he says, "I be-

held till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool ; His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him ; thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." Thus it was God often revealed Himself in the midst of flaming fire ; which element is not unfrequently used in Scripture as a type or emblem of the third Person in the adorable Trinity. To this John the Baptist alluded when, speaking of our Saviour's mission into this world, he said to the Jews, " He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

The reason why this metaphor is so often used in Scripture is obvious, and will appear from an after consideration.

SECTION III.

By many it is supposed that the burning bush that appeared to Moses in the land of Midian, is an emblem of the Divinity and human nature of Jesus Christ. The flame of fire, is supposed to signify the pure and spiritual nature of the third Person in the adorable Trinity, who is often represented in Scripture by the elements. Our Saviour

said to a ruler of the Jews, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." At other times, in the Holy Scriptures, the third Person in the Trinity is compared to water. Our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, " If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that sayeth to thee, give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." But as fire is the most pure and perfect of all the elements, it is perhaps the most suitable emblem of the Deity. It is a metaphor often used both by the Old and the New Testament writers. God by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah has declared, " The light of Israel shall be for a fire and His Holy One for a flame." And in Deuteronomy it is written, " the Lord thy God is a consuming fire." Also the Apostle Paul to Hebrews says, " Our God is a consuming fire."

Those who by faith receive the Holy Ghost, are represented as being baptized with fire. Fire enlightens, quickens, consumes, purifies, and transforms into its own nature ; and the Holy Spirit produces similar effects upon the human heart.

The Holy Spirit enlightens our dark and

benighted mind. The psalmist prayed that God would send forth His light and truth. When the day-star from on high arises in our hearts, moral darkness at once recedes before the Sun of Righteousness, and we see light in the light of the Lord. The sable curtains of the night are chased away, and driven from the chambers of the east, at the rising of the great luminary of the day. So, in like manner, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, the clouds of moral darkness are scattered and driven away.

Also it is the Spirit that warms our cold hearts. After our Saviour ascended to His native heavens, the disciples, referring to a scene that had transpired, while on the road to Emmaus, "said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" This is the experience of every true believer. All who receive the gift of the Holy Spirit feel a sweet burning of the love of God in the heart. At the conversion of the venerable founder of Methodism, he said, he felt his heart strangely warmed within him. The psalmist also said, "While I mused the fire burned."

By the warming influence of the Holy

Spirit we are also quickened. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." And by the same agency the *dross* and *tin* of our nature is consumed, and we are purified and transformed into the likeness and image of Him who created us in "righteousness and in true holiness." This is the privilege of all, on condition of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. All should seek for it, believe for it, and devoutly pray for it.

SECTION IV.

Those who suppose that the bush represents the human nature of Christ found their belief principally on the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who compares our Saviour to a "tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground." The union of the bush and fire is also supposed by some to represent the union of His Godhead and manhood. This appears to be founded upon the words of Moses, who, in the thirty-third chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, referring to the good will of the Lord, speaks of "Him that dwelt in the bush."

Others suppose the burning bush to represent the state of Israel, then entangled in the thorny bush of adversity: but we would give it a more general application,

and suppose it may represent the universal Church of Christ on earth.

Now, if we consider the bush an emblem of the Church militant, then we may also consider the fire, with which the bush burned, an emblem or representation of the fiery trials to which the Church of Christ always has been exposed. The people of God are a tried people. The Apostle Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

The Church of God, in every age of the world, has been exposed to troubles, trials, and sufferings; but while the Angel was in the bush, though it burned with fire, it was not consumed. So while Christ is in the Church, men and devils may rage, and the storms of infidelity may howl around it, it shall not be consumed. Just before our Saviour ascended to heaven, He said, "Lo, I will be with you, even to the end of the world." And God, by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, has promised that, "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through rivers, they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt,

neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." With these promises we need not fear. We have only to stand to our arms, and the Lord will support us, and give us supporting or delivering grace in every hour of affliction; and will give us strength and grace to overcome every spiritual foe, and bring us off more than conquerors. The Apostle Paul says, "*more than conquerors.*"

SECTION V.

When the Lord called unto Moses from the midst of the bush that burned with fire, he answered and said, "Here am I." Then the Lord commanded him to draw nigh, but to put the shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. "Moreover," He said, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." And when he had received the Divine command, to go and demand the release of the oppressed children of Israel, he at first hesitated, saying, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" But being assured that the Lord would be with him, he was not disobedient to the command, but

went forth; and after signs and wonders were wrought in the courts of Pharaoh, that wicked king was constrained to let the people go.

Moses was not disobedient to the command: he turned from the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law, which, it appears, was then his whole charge. So we should turn our affections from the things of this world, from our flocks and herds, and from all the brief *polluted* joys of earth, and turn to the Lord, with all the affections of the heart, and desires of the soul. To do this effectually, we need grace and strength from on high, which we may obtain through faith and prayer. Those who have faith in prayer, can struggle like a giant in a mighty conflict, and by perseverance at last rise like an eagle, full plumed, to the pure presence of Him who hears and answers prayer.

We who are called by the Spirit and by the word of God to obey His commands, and turn from spiritual bondage, and do all in our power to release others from its galling yoke, should not be so entangled with the cares of this world, our flocks or herds, as to be enervated, and so enfeebled that we cannot rise, and gain access at a throne of grace. But when our prayers

become a tempest of vehement supplication, through faith, we must prevail. But to secure this success at the throne of grace, we must expect all we need through the atoning merits of Christ; not at a future period, but *now*. Believing for a present salvation, a present blessing, is a point at which Christ never fails to meet us. The sun glass, when brought to the right focus, produces fire in an instant. So, when we come to the right focus or point,—that point is an entire renunciation of all sin, a full and entire consecration of all we have and are on the altar of the Lord, and accepting Christ as the only hope set before us, and faith in Him for a *present* salvation; that moment the Sun of Righteousness shining upon us, in an instant we catch the holy flame, realize a shock of Divine power, the heart is melted into tenderness, and the soul overwhelmed with the love, presence, and power of God, and filled with the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son. O, what unbounded mercies are bestowed upon us! Let us prize our privilege, and improve it, by consecrating all we have and are upon the altars of the Most High. Then we shall be able, through Christ, to triumph over all our spiritual foes, and go up at last with songs of praise,

and everlasting joy upon our heads, and ever be with the Lord.

CHAPTER X.

BOUNDLESS LOVE.

1. BOUNDLESS love of God ; how manifested. 2. Wonder of God's love to us. 3. God's condescension in sending His Son. 4. Boundless love ; how made to appear. 5. Love of God exceeds our comprehension. 6. Love of God not merited. 7. God's love commended to us. 8. Value of this love. 9. Reasons why we should love God. 10. The properties of the love of God ; free ; great ; its extent ; unchangeable ; perfect ; eternal.

SECTION I.

THE love of God to man is a doctrine of great interest and comfort to us. It is a subject that claims our devout meditation. The faith, the knowledge, and experience of the love of God, wrought by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of true believers, affords them a well-grounded hope that "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," will "with Him give us all things."

The Apostle Paul, in attempting to show the greatness of God's love to us, draws a

comparison between the love men have for each other, and the love of God manifested towards us. He says, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Perhaps one might be found who would die for an obliging, useful, and public-spirited friend; but none can be found who would lay down his life for his enemies. Who would die for the unjust, for those who are neither good nor righteous, who are unprofitable and really hateful, and as much opposed to their friend as sinners are to God? But "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." By this the love of God appears infinitely exalted above the love of man; for when we were wicked and unrighteous, unprofitable and unable to help ourselves, loathsome and hateful, enemies and haters of God; when there was nothing in us to move Him to love us, and when we were full of sin, which might have moved Him to express His indignation against us, even then He vouchsafed the highest expressions of love, by devising a scheme of redemption, and giving His Son to consummate the plan, and save

us from the power and consequences of sin. Herein the freeness of His unbounded love appears, to our wonder and astonishment. It is like an ocean without bottom or shore,—boundless as its Author.

The sufferings and death of Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary for us, is a bright and glorious commendation of the love of God. In other words, the love of God the Father, in giving His Son, and the love of Jesus Christ, in giving Himself to the death of the cross for us, is a glorious manifestation of infinite goodness and love that admits of no parallel.

All the perfections of God are infinite; and, in the method of our redemption by Jesus Christ, we have a bright and most luminous display of the justice and holiness, wisdom and goodness, and the mercy and love of God, which He has commended towards us in giving Christ to die for us.

“ O, for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour’s praises speak ! ”

SECTION II.

Now let us consider who it is that commends His love to us, and gave His only Son to suffer and die on Mount Calvary in

our room and stead. No less than the Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth, the supreme Judge and Governor of the universe, who is infinitely happy in His most glorious perfections, and verily has no need of us, and can serve Himself ten thousand ways without us.

If a great prince or potentate should set his love upon one he finds in the highway, —in the ditch,—poor, famished, and naked, diseased and loathsome, hated and hateful, it would be a matter of wonder and astonishment. Much more so in our case, when we consider that God is infinitely greater than all earthly monarchs, and yet loves such creatures as we are! For men to be kind to each other is not a great matter; for each may have need of the other, or may receive benefit one from another. The world is upheld by a combination of interests, like stones in an arch. The head cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." The prince needs the peasant, as well as the peasant the prince. But God stands in no need of us; we need His blessing and grace to sustain us, His bounty to supply us, His love to comfort us, His favour to make us happy, and His power to protect and preserve us. But He does not need us, or our services, to increase His happiness; and, therefore, His

love is wonderful. And it is wonderful indeed that a Being of such majesty, dignity, power, and purity, should condescend to set His love upon us. What a mercy!

SECTION III.

Consider, now, the Person who came to die for us,—no less than the only-begotten Son of God; His Son in such a sense as angels and men can bear no comparison under any circumstances whatever. He who suffered and died for us is the Son of God in a most singular sense, peculiar to Himself alone, and incommunicable to any other; an eternal Son, possessing the infinite nature and perfections of His Father; equal with His Father in power and glory, and infinitely beloved by Him.

To send a servant to help an enemy, and to suffer many grievous things on his account and for his benefit, would be an instance of great generosity and love. But to send an only Son, a dearly-beloved Son, to suffer and die for the redemption of His enemies, is beyond parallel. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” God had not another Son to give, nor a better favour

to bestow upon us. In Him we have all that we need, and all that we can desire.

SECTION IV.

The height, the depth, and boundless extent of the love of God will further appear, if we consider what the ever-blessed and most glorious Son of God came to do and to suffer for us. He came to take upon Him our nature, to veil His glory, and to be made of the seed of Abraham,—made under the law; which seems to have been necessary that He might obtain the right of our redemption. This, verily, was an amazing condescension.

Suppose one of the angels that stand before God, one who has long been permitted to dwell in His presence, should, for the sake of some special service to a number of men, leave his state of glory and happiness in the bright world above, and take up his dwelling in a human body, and be united to such a lump of earth, subjected to its laws and infirmities, we should evidently celebrate and admire such an act of generosity and kindness. But here, in the Son of God, we have infinitely greater love and humiliation manifested.

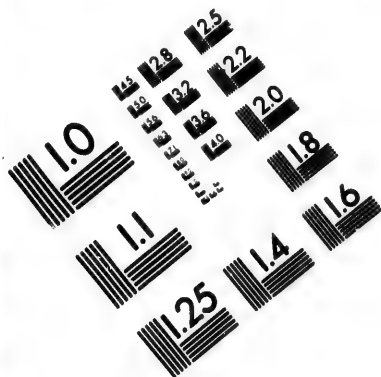
The Son of God, our great Redeemer, more excellent than the angels, became

man, and the Son of Man, that He might suffer and die for us, and exalt us to be the sons of God. Had He been sent only to assume our nature, and had he lived in it in all the ease, honour, and grandeur that human affairs will permit, and afterwards been translated to heaven with the acclamations of attending angels, there would have been great condescension even in this. But to take a body on purpose to suffer for us, and to be despised of men, reproached and reviled by His own creatures, whom He came to redeem and save, and to be scourged, pierced, wounded, and broken with many sufferings, griefs, and sorrows, both in soul and body, and then to languish, bleed, and die for us, is a manifest exertion of benevolence and love, that not only admits of no comparison, but is as boundless as the infinitude of His mercy.

SECTION V.

The death of Christ was violent and cruel, attended with unutterable pain and torture. It was a lingering and shameful death. Crucifixion was thought fit for none among the Romans but the vilest of the vile,—slaves and the worst of malefactors. It was an accursed death. Jesus Christ endured the curses of the Law, that we might





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enjoy all the blessings presented in the Gospel. He became man, that He might become a Man of Sorrows, a sacrifice for sin, and suffer the dreadful punishment due to our sins. This commends the love of God to us, for it exceeds all comprehension; and "hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." And "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." But the Son of Man died for His enemies, even while they were clamouring for His blood. Such were the tokens of His mercy, and the unbounded manifestations of His eternal love, in the redemption and salvation of the world.

SECTION VI.

Again, let us take a view of the persons for whom Christ died; and then let us consider what a high commendation it is of the love of God.

We did not love Him; but He loved us, and died for us, while we were sinners,—wretched and miserable sinners, rebellious, disingenuous, and ungrateful offenders, who have nothing amiable or worthy in us to claim His notice or regard. His love was free and independent of any merit in us. We have merited nothing but His displeasure.

There was no necessity or obligation on the part of the great Creator to love any of His rebellious creatures. It was in His choice whether any creature should have a being or not ; much less, then, whether any creature should or should not be the object of His love.

If a man may love whom he pleases, and enjoy those whom he loves, it would be a matter of wonder if he would not choose the best. But here is the wonder of God's love, that it centres upon the worst of creatures,—rebellious and sinful man, and, indeed, upon many of the worst of men.

SECTION VII.

In Scripture, man is described as being perfidious, disobedient, and rebellious against God. In the whole frame of our minds, and in all the actions of our lives, we have manifested opposition to the laws and will of God ; but even then Christ died for us. It is a matter of wonder that God should love such enemies and rebels, and that Christ should suffer and die for those who "hated" Him "without a cause," and had willingly subjected themselves to His deadly enemies,—sin and Satan. Yet while we were in this state, God granted to us the highest expression of His love, by giving His Son to die for us ; and the Son of God

exposed Himself to contempt and shame, agonies and death, for us. God loved the ungodly, and Christ loved sinners. This is love that surpasses all our most exalted thoughts and imaginations. And God commended this "love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

SECTION VIII.

Now, to understand the inestimable value of this love, let us consider the matchless benefits redounding to our advantage from this love of benevolence,—the love of God to man.

Jesus Christ, by His sufferings and death upon the cross, saves us from sin; from the guilt, power, pollution, and consequences of sin, which, if inflicted, would be purgatory in this world, and perdition in the next. Or, in other words, He saves us from the wrath and curse of God in this life, and from the intolerable torments of hell for ever and ever.

Through the death and merits of Christ we have all manner of spiritual and heavenly blessings bestowed upon us, and are reconciled to God, renewed in the spirit of our minds, justified, adopted into His family, sanctified,—prepared for heaven, and heaven prepared for us.

Jesus Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."

SECTION IX.

If a great king should redeem a miserable beggar from bondage and slavery, and elevate him to the honour and happiness of a crown, and possession of an hereditary kingdom, it would be a wonderful instance of benevolence, generosity, goodness, and love. But what God has done for us, in sending His Son to redeem and save us, is infinitely more. Then should we not adore Him, and love Him, because He first loved us?

When we bring all these considerations together, we may conceive something of the infinite greatness and value of this love. Any one of the above considerations renders the love of God towards us wonderful. What then shall we say of them altogether? O, the mercy and love of God! how vast, how unfathomable, and how boundless! It reaches to the lowest plunge of degradation, and raises the poor sinner to the immeasurable heights of heaven and glory. It extends over all the earth, and is vast as eternity.

SECTION X.

Now let us notice some of the properties of the love of God.

1. It is most generous and free. For when we were without strength, ungodly sinners, and enemies to God, and when there was nothing in us to move love, but we were proper objects of His hatred, wrath, and indignation, He granted the highest expression of His love, in the gift of His Son to suffer and die for us.

2. It is great, as well as free. No instance of human love can equal or even resemble it. The highest that ever rose, was for one friend to die for another; but Christ laid down His life for His enemies. This was a brilliant manifestation of infinite love.

3. In its extent. It is above all thought or conception of ours, as the Apostle Paul intimates, "That ye may be able, with all the saints, to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." It is above our understanding: we cannot search it out to perfection. We know not fully the dignity of His person, and the greatness of His condescension; and therefore cannot pretend to measure the breadth, the length, the height, or the depth of this love. It is boundless as eternity.

4. It is unchangeable. No act of unkindness or ingratitude of ours will alter or change it; not even unfaithfulness and deception, such as seldom admits of reconciliation among men. God hates the sin; but loves the sinner still. The Apostle Paul says, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Nothing that exists can separate us from the love of God. The apostle says, "Nor any other creature," that is, any other thing that exists. Neither angels, men, nor devils can separate us from the love of God.

The electric fluid, which pervades all nature, is the source of vegetation, animal heat, and motion; and is active, powerful, and pure; but is so subtile and spiritual that it is invisible. Still, it is one of the elements that exist. It is something,—a substance in existence. But not so with *cold*, its opposite. If we speak of cold as an adjective, we only refer to it as having the sense of a chill. If we refer to it as a substantive, we have reference to the cause of that sensation; and even frost is only the

last effect of cold. Therefore neither cold nor frost is anything more or less than the absence of heat. It is not an element that exists. So, when we speak of righteousness and true holiness,—the kingdom fixed within,—we refer to that burning, living principle within, which we may feel as a thing that exists. Not so with sin; we may personate it, or call it what we please. It is nothing like an element that exists. It is the absence of *good*,—the opposite of righteousness and true holiness. The apostle calls it the “transgression of the law;” therefore, an action, not a constituent part, a principle, or element that exists. The apostle declares, “Nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God:” but verily sin will. But it is not a “creature,” a thing that, in the abstract, exists as an element; but an act of rebellion against God.

5. The love of God is perfect. It is not passionate, or transient; but pure, perfect, and immutable, like Himself; for “God is love.”

It is free from all imperfection that might abate the heat and strength, or eclipse the light of it. It is without folly or defect, without hypocrisy or excess, without selfishness, alteration, or diminution. In a word, it is perfect and “passeth knowledge.”

6. It is eternal, which makes it a complete, lasting, and eternal happiness. As it was from eternity exercised in gracious purposes, so it will be continued throughout eternity in a never-ending state of happiness. For "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him."

Such is the generous freedom and infinite greatness of the love of God to sinners. Let us, therefore, give unto Him the honour due to His name, for His amazing love to us, by admiring it, and adoring Him for it. These considerations should engage us to love God, who thus commends His love to us. We are under infinite obligations to love Him who first loved us. It must be an inhuman and an intolerable disposition or temper that will not return love for love. The worst of sinners will often do this to each other.

The return of love is absolutely due, and therefore deserves no thanks or reward. The "publicans," who were counted the worst of men, do this; and shall we be worse than they? Shall we deal more disingenuously, more unworthily with God, than the worst of men deal with each other?

Shall we not love Him, who propounds it

as a motive to do so, "because He first loved us?" Great will be our deserved condemnation if we withhold our affections from Him, and centre them upon the world. But we who admire the love of God, and value an interest in it above all things, should make the most hearty, unfeigned, and entire consecration of ourselves, of all we have and are, upon the altars of the Most High.

We should honour, love, and serve God to the utmost of our power. In doing this, we will have the evidence that God loves us; for He has declared in His word, "I love them that love Me." Let us manifest our love to God by thankfulness and obedience to His laws, and by a frequent, devout commemoration of His love to us. Then we shall be enabled to say with the Psalmist, "O Lord, whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

All must know, from the light of nature, from reason, and from Divine revelation, that it is our duty, and will consummate our happiness, if we love, please, and serve God; that for this end we were made and sent into the world, to live, not according to our own will, but according to the will of our great Creator and Redeemer. But while

the sinner continues unconverted, he acts contrary to both his duty and his interest. Though he cannot change his nature, yet he lives in the wilful and habitual contempt of his duty. He neglects many duties that he might perform, and he commits many sins from which he might refrain. Many cannot love and serve God because they will not, and therefore justly deserve the displeasure due to the carnal mind.

The great end of the law is to direct, require, and command us to love and please God; but the unregenerated prefers pleasing himself, and serving his own lusts and desires.

Another end of both the Law and the Gospel is, to bring us near to God, that we may enjoy His favour and lovingkindness, and have communion with Him. But this cannot be designed or accomplished by the unconverted, because he places his affections on transitory things, and does not seek for communion with God.

Also, the end of the Law and the Gospel is to incline and enable us to glorify God. This is both our duty and our privilege. Let us see to it. It will cost less to become happy than will be required to make us miserable. If we attain to holiness, verily we shall be happy. Then let us seek for

holiness: it is the best philosophy of the wise, giving us comfort in afflictions, strength in weakness, and riches in our poverty.

It is not a wild blaze of passion that flashes and then vanishes; but it is enduring and eternal.

CHAPTER XI.

DUTIES ENJOINED.

1. CONTRARY to sinners' nature to please God; cannot; will not; reasons why; duties enjoined; first; second; third command. 2. Duties of fifth command; Paul before his conversion; reasons why sinners cannot please God. 3. Essential defect in service of wicked; only way to gain access at throne of grace; general invitation.

SECTION I.

It is a fact, admitted by all true Christians of every denomination, that those who are under the power and influence of a carnal mind, are enemies to God. The frame of their mind, the desire of their hearts, and the tenor of their life, are all displeasing to God. It cannot be otherwise while they

continue in that state. It is contrary to the nature of a sinner, as a rebel and enemy, to study or desire to please God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." They are also opposed to those who are in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit. In a word, those who are carnally minded, are destitute of the sanctifying Spirit and grace of God; unregenerated, and in a corrupt *and fallen* state of nature. But to be in the faith implies a state of grace, or, in other words, a state of true Christianity under the power and influence of the Spirit of Christ, in opposition to the power and dominion of corrupt nature. But believers may still have some remains of the corrupt nature in them; for it is written, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Of those who are in the flesh, it is asserted in Scripture that they cannot please God. But this is to be understood with this limitation; that is, so long as they continue in that state, they do not, because they will not make it the great business of life to please. love, and serve God. Some are open and professed enemies; by acts of disobedience and rebellion against God, they stand out in bold opposition to the law of God. But others are civil and sober, and by many in

the world called good men ; but they do not honour God by observing His law, in that manner and for the end He commands us ; they are therefore guilty of neglecting and despising the Gospel ; they are enemies and rebels, and in a state of condemnation.

Snow can never be made hot while it is snow ; but it may be dissolved into water by heat, and then be made hot ; so the carnal man in an unregenerated state cannot please God ; but when he is regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit, he may please God ; he is reconciled to God, and God is reconciled to him through the death of His Son.

As to the duties enjoined by the law, the unconverted cannot please God by the performance of them. The scope of the first command is to make men fear God above all, love Him above all, trust in Him, and delight in Him. But natural corruption inclines and disposes men to fear and love the creature more than the Creator, and to trust and delight in that which cannot afford substantial happiness.

They who are in the flesh cannot please God in keeping the second command, because the scope of it is, that we observe the ordinances of God's worship, to promote and maintain holiness and communion with Him. But corrupt nature inclines men to

idolatry, superstition, and formality, and at the best to exercise themselves in God's worship superficially and externally, to bribe their conscience to a false peace, that with the greater quietness they may secure the gratification of their carnal mind.

Neither can they keep the third command, because the scope of it is holy fear and reverence, seriousness and suitableness in the frame of our hearts, and our whole behaviour towards a most holy, righteous, and everywhere present God. But an unregenerated man has not the holy fear of God, and the lively faith of His Divine perfections, and treats irreverently the name, titles, attributes, and ordinances of God.

SECTION II.

Though a man may rest from labour, and attend upon the ordinances and God's house upon the Sabbath day, yet through the vanity of his corrupt mind he cannot keep the Sabbath holy in a spiritual manner. While the heart is unrenewed by grace, he cannot be in the spirit on the Lord's day, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, neither can he perform the duties of the fifth command, so as to please God. These duties must be performed through faith, and from a principle of love; but the unregenerated

man obeys only through fear, and with selfish views of worldly advantage.

The manner of observing the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth command, as performed by the unconverted, is defective and displeasing to God. Neither can he strictly observe the tenth command, which forbids covetousness, and requires contentment with our own lot in life, because an unconverted man is under the reigning power of corrupt lusts and vile affections, which are unsatiable, discontented, and envious.

Upon the whole an unconverted state is not only sinful but a very dangerous state; for such a person cannot keep any of the commands so as to please God. And though he may keep them as well as did the Apostle Paul before his conversion, it is with a design to establish his own righteousness, which is displeasing to God; because the end of the moral law, as it is taken into the dispensation of grace, is to be a "school-master" to bring us to Christ, that we may submit to His righteousness, and be justified by faith in the Son of God.

They who are in the "flesh" cannot please God; for they live in disobedience and rebellion against the great commands of evangelical repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "The times of ignorance

God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And "this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ."

In short, unconverted sinners cannot please God, because they are guilty of neglecting and despising the great remedy presented in the Gospel for the recovery and salvation of perishing sinners. They do not acknowledge and glorify God in the perfections He has displayed in the great method of our redemption. They do not acknowledge and honour Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of mankind. The command is, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him."

The unregenerated cannot please God, because of the stated contrariety and opposition between their nature and the nature of God. God is a Spirit pure and holy. They are carnal, sinful, impure, and unholy: so that they neither study to please God, nor can He be pleased with them, while they continue in that state: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

They want the requisites that are necessary to render an action good and well-

pleasing to God. They are not in a renewed and reconciled state. They have not fled to Jesus Christ for the renewing and sanctifying operations of His Spirit, nor accepted of Him as the only Mediator between God and men, to reconcile them to God. All who come to Jesus Christ for life are renewed by His Spirit, justified and sanctified by His grace, and God is pleased with them through His well-beloved Son. But unconverted sinners continue in a state of disobedience, enmity, and condemnation.

Unconverted sinners have not that faith, without which it is impossible to please God. They do not firmly believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. And while they do not believe in God's promises, nor in the Lord Jesus Christ, the wrath of God abideth on them, "because" they have "not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

SECTION III.

The best services of the wicked are under essential defect, either as to the end, or the manner in which they are performed, or the principle from whence they proceed. Their

prayers, their tears, their almsgiving, and other kinds of good works, are not accepted of God, because they lack the qualifications requisite to constitute an action good and acceptable in His sight ; namely, faith, love, humility, self-denial, and other graces of the Spirit. Cain's sacrifice was not accepted ; nor did Esau's tears secure spiritual blessings. Our best offerings, unless perfumed with the incense of the merits of Christ, will not be accepted. Our tears, our sighs, our contrition,—acts of benevolence, acts of devotion, and our prayers, all, *all* must be presented on the altar of Christ's merits. He is the only medium through which and by whom we can gain access at the throne of grace. Before He ascended to His native heavens, He declared, if we ask any thing in His name, it shall be given. What an encouragement is this to us poor mortals, who have no merit of our own ! The more needy we are, the more welcome to come ; and though we may be so far from being able to pay the uttermost farthing, that we have not a farthing to pay ; yet in Christ there is a fulness,—“enough for each, enough for all, and enough for evermore.” All are invited.

“Come, all the world ; come, sinner, thou ;
All things in Christ are ready now.”

CHAPTER XII.

MELCHISEDEC.

1. MYSTERIES of person and parentage of Melchisedec ; where referred to in Scripture. 2. Jewish tradition ; the apostle refers to office, not name. 3. King of Salem ; Jebus-Salem = Jerusalem. 4. The way Christ came to His office. 5. In what sense Melchisedec was without father or mother, beginning of days, end of life. 6. Christ a Priest and King. 7. Grace of repentance ; how obtained. 8. Justification ; peace ; refreshment, &c. 9. Christ a King. 10. Returns we should make to Him as Priest. 11. As King, &c.

SECTION I.

A THOUSAND idle tales have been told about Melchisedec, both in regard to his person and his parentage. And, no doubt, twice ten thousand vague and untenable notions have been entertained and reiterated both in regard to his person and his parentage. Many have been puzzled to know who he was, or what he was ; for the Apostle Paul declares he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life."

Many wild theories have been indulged by

both ancient and modern visionaries in regard to the appearance, person, name, office, residence, and government of this great Canaanitish prince. Some have wondered who he was; and because he is represented as being "without father and without mother," others have wondered, in all the world, what he was.

Some have supposed he was verily the son of God, or some purely spiritual intelligence. But the Apostle Paul says he was "made like unto the Son of God." Others follow the opinion of the Jewish rabbins, and suppose he was Shem, Noah's eldest son.

The fact is, Melchisedec is referred to in only three places in the Holy Scriptures. First, in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Genesis, where we have a brief history of this mysterious monarch. He is not referred to again, in Scripture, until we come to the hundred and tenth Psalm, where the psalmist, in referring to Jesus Christ as our great High Priest, exclaims, in a prophetic tone, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." After this, we find not the least reference to him in Scripture, till we come to St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle takes up the whole subject; and, in referring to the offices our Saviour sustained

in completing the great work of human redemption, he shows that, to accomplish this, He was made an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

SECTION II.

The tradition among the Jews, that Shem was the "Melchisedec," is founded, at least, on strong probability. Shem was three hundred and ninety-three years old when Abraham was born : and as he lived five hundred and two years after the Deluge, he evidently was alive, and stood as the head and father of their race, at the time Abraham returned from the slaughter of the confederate kings, when Melchisedec met him, as stated in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis.

It is no proof this prince was not Shem, merely because he is called Melchisedec ; for it will appear, from an after consideration, whatever the name of this individual was, it was not Melchisedec. Nor does the Apostle Paul pretend to say who his parents were, or what his name was ; but the burden of his argument, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, is to show that Christ was made an High Priest after the *order* of Melchisedec.

A question here arises at once,—In what respect was our Saviour made an High Priest after the *order* of Melchisedec ?

It may be necessary to observe that the word "Melchisedec" is not a proper noun, but a common substantive. It is not a proper name, but a title, or an epithet. The Apostle Paul says, "Melchisedec,—being by interpretation King of righteousness." It is admitted by all who are acquainted with the language in which the Old Testament was written, that "*Malchi-tsedek*" signifies "*my righteous king*;" or, if you please to transpose the sentence, as St. Paul has it in the seventh chapter and second verse of his Epistle to the Hebrews, "king of righteousness," a title justly given to him on account of the pure and righteous administration of his government. Any holy and righteous man, that sustained the office of priest and king at that time, would have been called, in that language, a "Melchisedec,"—that is, "a righteous king." Hence, it was not the name of the individual, but a title given to him on account of the position he occupied and sustained, not only as a just and holy man, but a "priest of the most high God," and a king, who reigned in Salem.

Was Melchisedec king of righteousness,—or, in other words, a righteous king? So is Jesus Christ, according to ancient prediction. God, by the mouth of the Prophet

Isaiah, exclaims, "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness." "And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." Jesus Christ is not only righteous in His government, but He alone is emphatically and essentially righteous. He is the "Lord our righteousness;" just and righteous in Himself, and in all His rewards and chastisements, in that He will give to "every man according as his work shall be." He is the Author of righteousness, as was proclaimed by the Prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

SECTION III.

Melchisedec was King of Salem, which the Apostle Paul says is, by interpretation, "King of Peace." Salem is a proper substantive,—the name of the city where Melchisedec reigned; and, according to the Apostle Paul's interpretation, Salem signifies "peace." That Salem was subsequently

called *Jerusalem* is quite evident. This we gather from what is contained in the eleventh chapter of the First Book of Chronicles, where it is stated, that "all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel. And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus: where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David."

All these historical facts are particularly mentioned in the fifth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel; which if we collate with the seventy-sixth Psalm, where it is written, "In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In SALEM also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion," we shall see that by Salem *Jerusalem* is meant; that it was first called "*Salem*," after which it was taken by the Jebusites.

While the Jebusites inhabited Salem, it was called "*Jebus*," then "Jebus-Salem;" but since it was captured by King David, it is called JERUSALEM.

Salem, which signifies *peace*, was the place where Melchisedec reigned; and it was in Jerusalem,—the identical same place,—that our Saviour appeared as King of the Jews; walked up and down in "*Jewry*;" and, as our great High Priest, suffered on Mount Calvary, to atone for the sins of the whole world,—

Melchisedec was king of *Salem*, which is, by interpretation, "*peace*." So is Jesus Christ the "Prince of Peace;" "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell: and, having made *peace* through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." For He "abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making PEACE." Therefore the Apostle Paul says, "He is our peace."

SECTION IV.

Melchisedec came to his office not by right of primogeniture, or in any way of succession, as did the sons of Aaron or Levi, but was

called of God to fill that office. The Apostle Paul, in referring to our Saviour, says, "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." Thus our Saviour came to His office not by primogeniture or succession, but by a *call* of the Father; and His priesthood was confirmed by an oath, as proclaimed, in a prophetic tone, by the psalmist: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

It appears one of the objections urged by the Pharisees against our Saviour as a high priest was, that He did not descend from a priestly tribe. The Apostle Paul admits "that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood;" but he shows that this is no argument against the priesthood of Christ; for He was made an high priest after the order of Melchisedec, and "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

SECTION V.

It appears Melchisedec had neither predecessor nor successor in his office; and

therefore the Apostle Paul says he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Not that he was without a natural father and mother; for the apostle is not referring to his person, but to his priesthood; not his humanity, but his office, in which he had no successor.

When Melchisedec was found sitting upon a throne in Salem, swaying a sceptre over the people, no doubt the question was asked, "Who is he? Is he the son of a king? Is he a prince? By what authority does he reign?" In turning to their archives, they could find the name neither of his father nor mother upon their records; that is, "his descent was not counted." In this respect he was legally (but not naturally or absolutely) "without father and without mother."

It may not be considered altogether allegorical to say, as a man, our Saviour was without father; and as God, He was without mother, for He existed before the world was made.

In a certain sense, both Christ and Melchisedec were without father and without mother; for they did not descend from the

original sacerdotal stock. Melchisedec evidently was a Canaanite, not of the seed of Abraham, and, therefore, without genealogy: "his descent was not counted," not reckoned up, not found on record. Of other patriarchs, spoken of by Moses, we have the descent recorded. Moses tells us who was their father; the time of their birth, "the beginning of their days," and the time of their death,—to them "the end of life." But concerning these things no mention is made in reference to Melchisedec, either in regard to the beginning of his days or end of his life. Melchisedec's genealogy is nowhere recorded: in this respect he was without father and without mother. Nor is there any record of the end of his priesthood, more than there is of his ancestry. His priesthood is therefore considered as perpetual. And so with the priesthood of Christ, who "abideth a Priest continually." For He is immortal, and ever lives as Priest, to make intercession for us.

The Jewish priests were mediators of the old covenant, by means of the sacrifices they offered upon Jewish altars: but Jesus Christ, who liveth for ever, has established a new and better covenant, by the sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the whole world; and as such, His priesthood is unchangeable

and eternal, without "beginning of days or end of life."

SECTION VI.

Melchisedec was both a king and a priest. Though he was of Canaanitish origin, he was religious; and this religious monarch thought it no disparagement to his kingly honours to officiate in the solemn rites of the worship of the true God.

In like manner, Jesus Christ is both a King and a Priest. The Prophet Zechariah, referring to Christ, speaks of a "Royal Priesthood." In this respect He was evidently made an "High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." Jesus Christ was promised as a King, when the psalmist proclaimed in a prophetic tone, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

He was also promised as a Priest, and as such set forth in all the types and shadows, and in the sacrifices presented on Jewish altars.

Jesus Christ executed the office of a

Priest by giving Himself a sacrifice for us, and by suffering on Mount Calvary, the "just for the unjust." He bore "our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed." As He fills the office of a Priest in our justification, so He also fills the office of King in our sanctification. In the heart of the sanctified believer He reigns and rules without a rival.

From the foregoing, it appears that Christ was made an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec,—

1. From his title, Melchisedec, which signifies "a righteous king." Jesus Christ is also a righteous King.

2. Melchisedec was King of Salem,—Salem signifies "peace." Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.

3. Melchisedec dwelt in Salem, afterwards called Jebus, then Jebus-Salem, and subsequently Jerusalem. Our Saviour sojourned in Jerusalem, and there He "suffered, the just for the unjust."

4. Melchisedec did not come to his office by succession, primogeniture, or seniority. Jesus Christ was called of God an High Priest after the same order.

5. Melchisedec was both a king and a

priest. Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, and the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Therefore we should trust in Him as our great High Priest, and obey Him as our King.

We should not think less of Him on account of His humble cradle, or His cross. He ceaseth not to be man in His highest estate; so He was God in His lowest. All His works were miracles, and His words oracles. His life was a pattern, and His death a sacrifice. His resurrection was glorious, and His ascension was most triumphant. As our High Priest, His intercession is prevalent, and His coming again will be magnificent. All the angels in heaven adore Him, the glorified millions praise Him, devils in hell fear Him. We should own His person, love His name, embrace His truth, bear His cross, obey His commands, live to His glory, and die in His favour, that we may dwell with Him eternally. Hallelujah.

SECTION VII.

While in this life, we need many mercies, and desire many blessings; and so far as our desires are gratified in obtaining spiritual blessings we are completely happy. Now, all that we need, to make us truly

happy, is amply provided for us by our great High Priest, who on Mount Calvary made an atonement for us.

We need the grace of repentance. It has been asked, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Verily not. Nor can the poor sinner change his heart. Without the grace of God, he might as well undertake to create a new world, as attempt to change and renew his old polluted heart. This needed grace we may have through our Lord Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest: He was "sent into the world to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sin."

It is admitted that faith is the scriptural condition of our justification; but it must not be forgotten that repentance is one hinge on which our salvation turns. God has never promised pardon to the impenitent; but through the merits of our great High Priest, we may obtain all that grace and strength to enable us to repent, turn from, and forsake all our sins.

The sinner may loathe past sins, on account of his condemnation, and the penalty inflicted; but true repentance inclines us to *hate* present as well as past sins, and forsake them, because they are defiling to the soul, and offensive to God. The most

prominent *feature* and important part of repentance is, not merely to grieve over, or mourn on account of, past sins, but to turn from them. It is of no account to sorrow for our sins unless we forsake them. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

SECTION VIII.

Being sinners both by nature and practice, and under condemnation, we need pardon and justification. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But we may be "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," our great High Priest, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Now we may obtain justification through faith in our great High Priest, who made ample atonement for our sins by His obedience unto death.

Also, we need regeneration, which implies a radical change—a new creation; for, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." Now, all this is accomplished, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Therefore we conclude that it is through Him, who was made an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, that we obtain justification and regeneration, together with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and every other blessing conferred upon us.

SECTION IX.

Now, as Jesus Christ fills the office of Priest in our justification and regeneration, so He fills the office of King in our sanctification. When all our ransomed powers, all we have and are,—all, *all* are laid upon the altars of the Most High, and our offering perfumed with the incense of the merits of Christ, it will be accepted. The kingdom will be fixed within. Then, and not till then, Christ, as King, reigns in the heart without a rival.

This sanctification, this holy, happy state, we obtain through our Lord Jesus Christ as

our King to reign in our hearts, and rule over us. It is written, "It is the Lord that sanctifieth you."

Also, it is through Him we receive actual peace with God; for, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the world we may have tribulations, but in Christ we have peace. When we enlist as faithful soldiers in the cause of Christ, as our King He will not only subdue our spiritual foes, but give us *peace*. He came to negotiate peace between offending man and offended Justice. He made peace by the blood of His cross. He also gives us refreshment—the water of life, and bread sent down from heaven. Our Saviour said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Also, as our Prophet, by His word and Spirit, He teaches us the way of salvation. In a word, through Him we receive every grace and blessing we need to make us useful in life, triumphant in death, and happy through all eternity.

SECTION X.

If we receive so many mercies and blessings from our Saviour, who is our Prophet, Priest, and King, a question arises, What returns should we make for such benefits received? In answer to this question, we only need observe, that as our Prophet, we should be taught by Him, take Him as the Man of our counsel, and endeavour to imitate Him in all His imitable perfections.

Abraham paid *tithes* to Melchisedec, who was "Priest of the Most High God." Then, so to speak, we should pay tithes to our spiritual Melchisedec, who is our great High Priest, and to whom we are indebted for all we enjoy. The tithes we should pay is not a tenth, nor half, but all we have, and all we are. The requirement is, "Son, or daughter, give Me thy heart." If we give the heart, we give all. This is our duty; for "we are bought with a price: therefore we should glorify God with our souls and our bodies, which are His." We may glorify God, not only by obeying His commands, but also by trusting in the merits of Christ, our great High Priest, who has made an ample atonement for the sins of the whole world. If I had a thousand souls, I would risk them all on the merits

of Christ, who, as our High Priest, has made an atonement of infinite merit, and therefore is able to save to the uttermost all who trust and believe in Him.

SECTION XI.

As our King we owe Him true allegiance. Those who enlist under the banner of an earthly prince, on receiving the bounty avow allegiance: they are then clothed in regimentals, and with a coat of mail from head to foot. And all necessary food and munitions of war are furnished.

So with the soldier of the Cross. When he enlists under the banner of Christ, he receives the royal bounty, the grace of God shed abroad in his heart; and vows true allegiance to the King of kings, not for a given time, ten, twenty, or thirty years, but for ever. And then he is clothed with the robes of righteousness, and shod with the sandals of the Gospel of peace. He is not sent to war a warfare at his own charge, but is furnished with the breast-plate of righteousness, to ward off the javelins that may be cast upon him by the adversary. He is furnished with all the necessary munitions of war, "the sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God, and the helmet of salvation. These weapons are not carnal,

but spiritual and mighty. Also, he is amply supplied with food,—the bread of life,—meat that endureth unto everlasting life; and drinks of the streams of salvation; and is made “strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son.”

The Christian soldier being thus well armed, well equipped, and well supplied, to carry on the warfare against the world, the flesh, and Satan, he goes forth under the banner of the great Captain of our salvation, and he sweeps over the field of battle, till every foe is vanquished.

And when the warfare is ended, and universal peace proclaimed, the old veterans of the Cross will return from the battle ground, to enjoy everlasting peace. They shall then have an inheritance in glory. As pensioners, they will enjoy a rich bounty, and wave palms of victory for ever and ever.

Those who conquer and overcome our spiritual foes shall not only have an inheritance in glory, but wear crowns in glory. They shall be kings, and reign with Christ in glory. It is of but little consequence to talk about aristocracy in this world; for the world and its fashions are all passing away. But saints are the genuine aristocracy of heaven,—kings and priests. They shall dwell in light. Waves of light will eternally

roll before them. The glorified shall not hobble about paradise at the heels of seraphs, but climax high and still higher around the burning throne above, and in the sunlight of heaven flutter from one mountain of glory to another.

As Christian soldiers let us fight on. And though we may have many foes to encounter, if we go forth in the strength of our great Redeemer, under the banners of the Captain of our salvation, we will be well able to go up. We may have to club our way all through life; but if faithful, we shall triumph at last. Our warfare may be arduous, but our success, in the strength which God supplies, will be certain, and the reward will be illustrious.

CHAPTER XIII.

NECESSITY OF PROPITIATION.

1. MERITORIOUS cause of our justification; what implied in propitiation. 2. Design of sacrifices. 3. Necessity of propitiation. 4. Man's insufficiency to make satisfaction. 5. Infinite atonement required. 6. Promises, &c.; types, &c.; Christ prefigured. 7. Christ set forth in ordinances.

SECTION I.

It is admitted by the Apostle Paul that no flesh can be justified by the deeds of the law, because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Yet justification is attainable, and is actually attained, by all, without exception, whether Jew or Gentile, on the condition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and if we plead the benefit of His atonement, we may enjoy His righteousness, and the freeness of His grace. We are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

The meritorious cause of our justification is Jesus Christ offered as a propitiatory sacrifice for us. This, and this alone, is the propitiation on account of which God is

appeased, and reconciled to us miserable sinners saved by grace. The principal and impulsive cause of our justification, we have in God the Father, who of His boundless goodness, grace, and mercy, was moved to set forth His Son to be a propitiation for us. But the necessary means on our part, by which we may have an interest in this propitiation, is faith in the blood of Christ. The end of God's justifying us after this manner is, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins, and show forth His goodness and mercy in forgiving sinners, for the sake of His Son who suffered on Mount Calvary. In this we have a luminous manifestation of God's faithfulness, in fulfilling all the prophecies concerning the expiation of sin by the Messiah.

In a word, the Son of God who shed His precious blood, and died on Mount Calvary to save sinners, was set forth or appointed by the Father to be the propitiation for sin; and as such, He is now offered in the Gospel, to be received in faith, and to declare His righteousness in the justification and eternal salvation of all who believe in Him.

By a propitiation we understand an atonement, a satisfaction, a sacrifice offered to God, to satisfy His offended justice.

"Propitiation," wherever it occurs in the New Testament, alludes to the sacrifices of atonement and expiation, appointed under the Old Testament, in conjunction with the mercy-seat, &c.

By these God taught His people that He is merciful and reconcileable, and that they might obtain reconciliation and pardon through the promised Messiah, on account of that sacrifice which He was to offer.

SECTION II.

The design of the sacrifices offered on Jewish altars, with respect to the Father of our mercies, was to make a typical atonement for sin, to appease Him when He was offended; to render Him propitious when He had cause to show His wrath.

And with respect to the sinner, the end contemplated was, to obtain the forgiveness of his sins, deliverance from his guilt, and from the punishment to which he was exposed. When the sinner offered a bullock, a ram, a he-goat, a lamb, or a kid, for a sacrifice of atonement, he laid his hand upon the head of the victim, signifying and confessing that he offered it in his stead, to satisfy and typically atone for him, by suffering death, which he himself deserved.

These sacrifices might indeed (at least typically) expiate ceremonial guilt, but they had no merit in them to make satisfaction for moral guilt. Nor had they any efficacy, to cleanse from moral pollution. They served only as means and signs appointed by the great Head of the Church, referring to the great sacrifice He had provided to be offered in the fulness of time.

SECTION III.

The necessity of a propitiation or satisfaction to Divine justice for our sins, is founded upon principles of justice. To form a right and proper judgment on this subject, it may be necessary to notice, that in every sin we commit, there is a kind of infinite evil or infinite demerit incurred, the transgression being committed against the majesty of an infinitely great and holy God. Therefore our sins deserve a kind of infinitude of punishment.

It is also to be remembered that the rectitude, the justice, and holiness of the Divine nature oblige Him to testify His abhorrence to sin, and His indignation against offenders, by punishing the offence either in the person of the offender, or in Him who is substituted in his place.

As Judge of all the earth, the supreme

Governor and Ruler of the universe, He must maintain the honour and rectitude of His own laws; that encouragement may not be given to the rest of His subjects to violate His law, seeing that offenders cannot escape without punishment. It was therefore proper and, so far as we can judge, necessary, that the stern demands of justice should be met, and satisfaction be given, for the offences of those whom He loved, and to whom He desired, and, we may say, even intended, to show great favour and mercy.

SECTION IV.

Now it appears that all the offerings and sacrifices prescribed by the law, and all that finite men could give, do, or suffer, were insufficient to be a propitiation; for a sacrifice of infinite value was absolutely necessary to atone for sin. This appears from the consideration, that nothing short of an infinite kind of satisfaction could answer the ends of justice that were proposed. That is, if justice insisted upon a satisfaction at all.

The great ends for which a complete satisfaction appeared necessary, were, that God might give sufficient proof of His natural, perfect, and eternal aversion and

hatred to sin; and that other rational beings might have no encouragement to rebel, by seeing others revolt without being condignly punished; and also that the honour of His laws might be sufficiently maintained, and the insult offered to His infinite Majesty be repaired.

But none of these ends could be gained by accepting a finite sacrifice. This would not have been equal to the offence against an infinite Being. He might as well have passed by the offence, (if He could,) and not insisted upon the reparation of His honour and the claims of justice, as to have taken up with a sacrifice not of infinite value.

If He had accepted of a finite satisfaction, it would not have been a sufficient proof of His infinite love of holiness and His abhorrence of sin.

Nor yet would a finite satisfaction have been a punishment equal or proportionate to the offence committed by transgressing the Law of an infinitely just and holy Being. Therefore none of these ends contemplated could be gained by a finite satisfaction.

An infinite satisfaction was absolutely necessary, before God in honour could be reconciled to sinners, and their eternal

salvation secured. Justice required it. Before the offender against the Law could be saved, the stern demands of inflexible justice had to be met. This was fully accomplished by our Saviour on Mount Calvary.

SECTION V.

An infinite atonement was required. Finite man was not able to offer such a sacrifice. All the saints in heaven and on earth were inadequate for the task. None could atone for another. Nor could any one atone for himself. Therefore all must have perished without hope of redemption, if God had not displayed His infinite wisdom and goodness, in devising a scheme of redemption, and commending His love to sinners, by setting forth His only begotten Son, of infinite dignity and merit, to be a propitiation for our sins.

In the fulness of time, the Son of God appeared in our nature, that He might be a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and in a state of great humiliation substituted himself in the room and stead of sinners, and died to redeem them. This satisfaction was perfect. The infinite dignity of His person gave sufficient value to the sacrifice He offered. He suffered, and Divine justice

was satisfied. All the ends of satisfaction were answered. He was constituted our great High Priest, and offered Himself a sacrifice for us.

He died, not only to purchase a mere reconcilability, according to the Arminians, and for our good, as the Socinians say; but He died in our room and stead, to reconcile us to God, and obtain the remission of sins. Our sins were imputed to Him, and His righteousness is imputed to us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him." "He was made sin for us." That is, our sins were imputed to Him. "He shed His blood for the remission of our sins, and gave His life for our ransom." In this sense God set forth His son to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins.

SECTION VI.

By Divine appointment Jesus Christ was set forth by promises, by prophecies, and by types and shadows, under the former dispensation. These prefigured Christ to come, and taught men to look for, and expect redemption and salvation through, Him.

The person, actions, and sufferings of Christ as our great High Priest were set forth by the ceremonial Law, and especially by the sacrifices, the priesthood, the tabernacles, the mercy seat. These all prefigured Christ, and taught men to look to Him for remission of sins.

Jesus Christ having satisfied the demands of the Law, so that Divine mercy might manifest itself, God the Father, as Judge, declared Himself satisfied and well pleased. This He testified by raising Christ again from the dead, and receiving Him up into heaven. And, according to our Saviour's promise, He sent forth His Spirit in such a remarkable and extraordinary manner as to apply and confirm Christ's purchase,—the grace and mercy of God to sinners.

SECTION VII.

Now, under the New Testament, God has set forth Christ as a propitiation in His word, which declares the counsels and purposes of God concerning the redemption of sinners, and what Christ has done and suffered for us and what we may expect, if we believe on His name.

He is set forth in His ordinances, in the preaching of His word, and in the sacra-

ments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thus God sets Him forth to be the propitiation for our sins. And He commands us to believe in His name. If we refuse or neglect, we shall not, cannot, enjoy the benefits of the atonement He has made.

Believing in Christ, or to have faith in Him, is variously described in the Holy Scriptures both by the acts and the effects of it; such as looking to Christ, coming to Him, fleeing to Him, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, receiving Him and obeying Him. This duty is ours, but the grace whereby we perform it, is the work of God's Spirit in us. This faith, by which we are saved, includes not only an assent to the truth of the Gospel, the testimony of God concerning His Son, but a hearty consent to be saved by Him upon His own terms; a humble and willing acceptance of Him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King; and an entire reliance upon the merit of His active and passive obedience for justification and eternal life. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His holy name." And the Apostle Paul declares that, "being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

Without this faith we cannot be justified; and by it, as the great mean appointed, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

SECTION VIII.

In the method of our redemption through Jesus Christ there is a glorious display of many of the Divine perfections; the wisdom of God, His goodness, His power in making it effectual, and His truth and faithfulness in fulfilling His promises; His holiness in declaring His perfect hatred to sin, as manifested in the sufferings of Christ; His righteousness in requiring satisfaction due for offences; and His mercy in freely forgiving our sins for His Son's sake.

The sins of the Old Testament believers were forgiven, on account of what Jesus Christ was to do and suffer for them. They believed in Him that was to come. We believe in Him who did come. By faith all believers renounce their own righteousness, and plead the merits of Christ. And by faith being united to Him, as living members of His mystical body, they have an interest in Him, and are justified by Him.

By faith, receiving and resting upon the righteousness which Christ wrought out by His obedience and suffering, we are justified;

and His blood, being applied by faith, has a powerful virtue in cleansing "us effectually from all sin."

All who trust in and apply to our Lord Jesus Christ have right to the propitiation set forth in God's word, and the blessed effects of it. They are justified and sanctified; and to them belong the adoption of children, and a right to the heavenly inheritance, which we all may enjoy throughout the countless ages of eternity.

CHAPTER XIV.

ETERNITY AN ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTE OF GOD.

1. Essential attribute of God ; all nations acknowledge a supreme power ; heathens know not whether the Ruler of the universe is a friend or a foe. 2. No effect without a cause ; God was before created things. 3. If no beginning, no end. 4. Eternity expressed by parts. 5. Immutability. 6. Omnipotent ; eternal ; perfect. 7. Man's eternity. 8. Infinite duration, how boundless. 9. Think of eternity as if dying. 10. God's relation to His people ; a dwell-

ing place. 11. He protects; God gives delivering or supporting grace. 12. May come to Christ. 13. The weary. 14. Be inspired with gratitude. 15. Conditional benefits. 16. Confidence. 17. Happy soul.

SECTION I.

ETERNITY is one of the essential attributes of God. No creature is infinite, therefore, in the full sense of the term, no created being is eternal. Eternity belongs to God alone. He is the first cause of all things. He alone is eternal; that is, He is "from everlasting to everlasting."

We must admit that there is an Eternal Being, or there would be nothing in existence. It is great folly to ascribe eternity to creation. Nothing created is eternal, and that which is eternal was not created.

The gulf between something and nothing, is one which human reason cannot pass. And the idea of a proper creation out of nothing, is one that never entered the head of the wisest philosopher on earth. Some who are not satisfied with revelation, try to believe in the eternity of matter; but all who enjoy the light of Divine revelation, and believe the Gospel, are not only convinced of the truth of the existence of an Eternal Being, but also have just conceptions of the attributes of His nature.

All nations have acknowledged a Supreme Power. But the light of nature affords no materials by which we can form adequate conceptions of His attributes. Without Divine revelation, the heathen has no means of judging whether he is under the misrule of hatred, or government of love. He cannot tell whether the Ruler of the universe is his friend or his foe. But revelation dispels this gloom, and lets in the pure light from heaven; removes our doubts, and teaches us that God is eternal, and of infinite goodness; that He ever employs the attributes of His nature to promote the happiness of His creatures; and that He is both omnipotent and immutable.

SECTION II.

God is eternal. This term only belongs to God. Something of necessity must be eternal. If there ever had been a period in which nothing did exist, there never would have been anything in existence. There can be no effect without a cause; consequently, if life is not a dream,—if there is any thing really in existence,—there must be some Being self-existent. He must be eternal; for there is no way by which such a Being could begin to exist. He could not act prior to His own existence: therefore He

always did exist, "even from everlasting to everlasting."

God was before the beginning of created things. It is written, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now, as He is without beginning, so He is without end. That being that exists by virtue of his own nature, exists of absolute necessity. We can conceive no way by which he can cease to exist. The Psalmist has declared, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

SECTION III.

The Being that had no beginning of duration, verily can have no end. As He always was, so He always will be, what He is,—"the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

SECTION IV.

Sometimes eternity is expressed by parts;

for instance, when we refer to infinite duration that is past, and we call it "eternity past." And, in view of the future, we say, "eternity to come." Now, strictly speaking, these words are without meaning; for they seem to convey the idea, that there are two eternities, which is impossible; for eternity swallows up all the past, present, and future. But we use these terms in an accommodated sense; for with God the past and the future are alike: with Him all is one great eternal *now*.

SECTION V.

God is eternal, and therefore of necessity He is immutable: His eternity and immutability are inseparably connected. The Being that is eternal, must of sheer necessity be immutable. But whatever being has a beginning is changed by passing from nothing to a state of existence, and, consequently is mutable.

But the being who has no other cause of his existence than the sheer necessity of his own nature, cannot change. He is always the same. The psalmist says, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." And the Apostle Paul exclaims, "Thy years shall not fail."

SECTION VI.

As God is eternal and immutable, so also He is Omnipotent, "The Almighty." He cannot be limited by any other being. All power is in His hand. When He speaks He shakes creation. When He utters His voice He fills eternity. His power is matchless and eternal. All the attributes of God are eternal: therefore His power is eternal. The Apostle Paul speaks of His "eternal power."

He is infinitely perfect in all His attributes, and therefore incomprehensible. Well might Job exclaim, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven: what canst thou do? Deeper than hell: what canst thou know?" His ways are past finding out. And He dwells in light not to be approached by created intelligences.

SECTION VII.

As God is perfect in all His attributes, so He is also eternal in all His perfections. Eternity belongs alone to Him; for there never was a period in which He did not exist, and there never will be a time when He will cease to exist; hence He is "from everlasting to everlasting." But not so with man: there was a time when he did not exist, but there will never be a period

in which he will not exist, either in happiness or woe. Those who miss their way to heaven will suffer the "vengeance of eternal fire," in a world of dungeons, of spiritual death and despair.

But all who believe in Christ, and obey His commands, will enter into "life eternal." From this it appears, whether made happy, or miserable, whether lost or saved, we shall never cease to exist.

SECTION VIII.

Now, when we speak of this infinite duration that is before us, what shall we call it? We have no words to describe it, unless we call it "eternity." How impossible for us to comprehend it! When we speak of eternity, it seems that we can understand it: but when we duly consider what we speak of, we find we do not. For with the most extended grasp of the mind, we cannot comprehend it.

When we speak of a given number of days, we may fully comprehend it. We may speak of a given number of months or years, and comprehend it. We may speak of any given time, and understand it; but when we extend our thoughts to infinite duration, we are lost and bewildered in the strangling attempt to fathom it.

SECTION IX.

If we could add as many years as there are particles that compose this entire globe, and add to that as many more as there are drops in the ocean; and could we add to that as many figures as could be clustered on a belt that would wrap around the universe of God; and then, could we extend these figures in one everlasting horizontal line, double, and then multiply these figures on themselves a thousand times; and could the mind be so enlarged and expanded, that with one tremendous grasp we could comprehend the crowned line, we should see that after so many years have passed, there are no less years bosomed in eternity than when the first moment had passed away.

Such is the boundless ocean of eternity before us. O, eternity! And is it possible that any who are conscious of this can go on through life, thoughtless, prayerless, and careless, tottering upon the brink of death, knowing that everlasting happiness or woe depends upon the course pursued the few days we remain suspended in the scale of probation?

We should be careful how we direct the arrow, when we have but one to shoot at the mark. If we lose the soul, all will be gone.

We have but one soul to save or lose, and but one chance : lose that, and we are ruined for ever.

Let us often think of death and eternity. And when we think on this subject, we should not think as if we were only thinking ; but we should think as if we were actually dying. There is but one step between us and death. Every breath we draw is but a sigh for immortality. Soon we will round the stormy cape of death, cross the narrow stream, and enter the boundless ocean. Through faith in our great Redeemer we may obtain a fitness for His kingdom, and enter into that everlasting rest that remains for His people.

SECTION X.

Having endeavoured to notice the Almighty as an eternal and immutable Being, we will now consider the relation He holds towards His people.

Ever since the creation of the world God has had a people on earth who have served Him and loved His cause. His people are not of the world, therefore the world has always hated and persecuted them. But God has been their dwelling place in all generations. He has been as a rock cleft to take them in. His people have ever been

near and dear to Him; and He has always protected and preserved them.

The Jewish nation once comprised the whole church of God on earth. They were emphatically the people of God, of whom it was said, "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself above all the nations that are upon the earth."

SECTION XI.

For His chosen people He wrought out many deliverances. We need not confine our remarks to the many expressions of mercy extended towards His chosen people, the children of Israel; for the Lord has always been as a dwelling place to His people in every age of the world. In the midst of the concussion of empires, the prostration of thrones, the clash of arms, "and garments rolled in blood," He has been their Deliverer, and always has protected His people. He has been as a wall of fire round about them, and verily they have been secure. That is, the Lord has always given His people supporting grace, or delivering grace. He has either supported them in their trials, or delivered them from their afflictions.

Sceptics say, God has not always fulfilled

His promises to His people; that He has not always delivered them from temporal calamities, sufferings, and death.

We admit, some of God's people have suffered many afflictions, and even martyrdom; but we are not to infer from that, that the promises of God have failed; for the Lord has always been with them in their affliction, and has never forsaken them in death. He has said, "In trouble I will be with you, and I will deliver you."

By the turn of the finger, the Lord might have prevented His servant Daniel from being cast into the den of lions. But while He permitted His enemies to cast His servant into the den, He nevertheless preserved him there.

And so with the three Hebrew worthies. The Lord did not prevent them from being cast into the furnace of fire; yet He preserved them there, though it was heated seven times hotter than before. Three were cast into the furnace; but they saw four walking in the midst of the flames, and one was like unto the Son of Man. The consequence was, they were enabled to come forth from the furnace without the smell of fire upon their garments.

It matters not with the people of God, whether they be in the water or out of it, in

the fire or out of it, so that Christ is but with them. Luther said he would rather be in hell with Christ, than be out of hell without Him. If Christ is with us, no matter where we be, all will be well. The promise is, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

The promises of God have never failed. He always saves His people from sickness, or makes their bed in their afflictions. He saves them from persecution, or supports them under its iron hand. He saves them from death, or enables them to triumph in it. And if they depart to be with Christ, the apostle says, it "is far better."

With the people of God it is a matter of indifference whether they be delivered from afflictions, or supported in them; whether they have supporting grace, or delivering grace. If they have not the one, they may have the other. The promise cannot fail.

SECTION XII.

The Lord is represented in Scripture by various figures. Sometimes as "the shadow of a rock in a weary land;" sometimes as "a

hiding place," and sometimes as a dwelling place, to His people in all generations.

The reason why these figures are used must be obvious to every thinking mind.

For instance, when a labouring man, who earns his bread by the sweat of his face, becomes nearly exhausted from much labour and hard toil, he needs refreshment to recruit his wasted strength; and, in that case, where should he go? Surely not to a barren waste, nor to a dreary mountain-top, but to his habitation, where he expects to partake of a repast provided for him. And being nourished and refreshed, he resumes his daily avocations with renewed vigour.

In like manner, those who labour for "the bread which came down from heaven" and the waters of life, may be supplied with an abundance. When they hunger and thirst, let them come to Christ as to a dwelling place. God, by the mouth of the prophet, has given a broad invitation,—
"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And our adorable Redeemer said, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

Our Saviour has also said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them.

SECTION XIII.

Where should the labouring man go for rest? Should he not retire to his habitation, there to rest his weary limbs? And, in like manner, those who are weary and heavy-laden, all who feel the burden of sin, may come to Christ as to a dwelling place. The Rock that was cleft will take them in. Then let the winds blow high or low, let the storms howl around them, verily they are secure.

Is it a storm of sickness? The Lord has promised to make the bed of His people in all their afflictions, and strengthen them on the bed of languishing.

Is it a storm of temptation? The Lord has promised that we shall not be tempted with more than we can bear, but will make a way for our escape.

Is it a storm of trouble in the world? The Lord has promised, "I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him and honour him: with long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

Is it a storm of persecution? Our Saviour has said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

"Though Satan enrages the wind and the tide,
The promise assures us the Lord will provide."

SECTION XIV.

The goodness of God in protecting and preserving us should inspire us with feelings of gratitude. If our neighbour feeds us when we are hungry, gives us drink when we thirst, clothes us when naked, or administers to our wants in any way, we feel a pleasure in making some expression of our gratitude. It is thought by some, that ingratitude is one of the blackest crimes of which a fallen creature can be guilty. If so, should not our hearts be inspired with feelings of the deepest gratitude to the bountiful Donor of all our mercies? He supplies all our temporal and spiritual wants. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh from the Father of lights." He who feeds the ravens, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, will supply all our real wants.

We are under obligations to Him for food and raiment, health and friends; for every deliverance wrought out for us, every escape from danger, and for every mercy we enjoy.

SECTION XV.

But we are still more deeply indebted to God for the conditional benefits of the atonement. In temporal blessings,—food and raiment, rain and sunshine, health and friends,—both saint and sinner seem to share without distinction; these blessings appear to be bestowed unconditionally.

But spiritual blessings are obtained and enjoyed only on condition of our faith in Christ, and obedience to the requirements of the Gospel. On these conditions, the people of God enjoy spiritual health, raiments of salvation, a well-grounded hope of heaven, and peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

On these conditions of faith and obedience, all may enjoy all the communicable fulness of Christ. And for such unbounded mercies and blessings we should be truly grateful.

SECTION XVI.

The consideration of God's eternity and immutability should inspire our hearts

with feelings of confidence and affiance in Him.

If the Lord has always been as a "dwelling place" to His people "in all generations," He always will be. And if He always has been the true source of our joy and comfort in life, our deliverer in the hour of trial and danger, wherefore should we now entertain a doubt? Why should we distrust His goodness or His mercy? "In Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He who fed us last will feed us still. And if He is immutable, what He always has been to His people, He ever will be. "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Such is our frailty, and such our weakness, that we often fear our afflictions will be more than we can bear, and that we shall yet fall by the hand of our spiritual foe. But wherefore should we doubt? Has God ever forsaken those who trust in Him? Let us think of the dangers through which He has brought us, the trials and afflictions under which He has sustained us, and the many mercies He has bestowed upon us; and then take into the account the soul-cheering fact, that He is immutable, and that "His mercy endureth for ever," and we ask, May we not confide in Him?

Let us throw our doubts away, and bid our fears be gone; for the Lord is the dwelling place for His people, and "from everlasting to everlasting" He is God.

SECTION XVII.

If the Lord is as a dwelling place to His people, and protects them amidst all the storms in life, and if He has redeemed and will save all who come to Him, and trust in Him, reader, have you a lot and a part among His people? Do you go to Him for rest, for spiritual food and protection? In the hour of temptation do you fly to Him? When the sun of affliction shines upon you, do you find a safe retreat beneath the expanded wing of His love? If so,

"Happy soul, to Jesus join'd,
And saved by grace alone."

You may now sing:—

"O, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

CHAPTER XV.

INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN.

1. INHABITANTS of the celestial world; angels; their number, their strength. 2. Possess perfections. 3. Angels and glorified saints. 4. New song. 5. Saints nearest the throne. 6. The object of worship. 7. Divinity of Christ. 8. Attributes of Christ. 9. Saints and angels praise God with loud voices; silence half an hour.

SECTION I.

WHILE in this world we know but little about heaven, for we "see through a glass, darkly;" but the word of God enables us to form some conceptions of its blessedness, and brings to our view some of the scenes of the invisible world. Divine revelation reveals to us an interesting account of the inhabitants of the celestial world; their acts of devotion, and the object they worship. We read of an innumerable multitude in heaven worshipping God and the Lamb for ever.

Human reason affords us no materials by which we can form adequate conceptions of incorporeal substances; but it is evidently revealed in the Holy Scriptures that there are

such beings as we call "angels," which are spiritual intelligent substances, the first in rank and dignity among created beings which compose the inhabitants of heaven.

The word "angel" signifies a messenger, but does not describe the nature of these intelligences; but the offices to which they are appointed, especially by way of message or intercourse between God and His creatures on earth, in which sense they are sometimes called "the ministers of God." The Prophet Daniel said, "Thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." These do His pleasure as ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

The existence of such immaterial, invisible beings was generally acknowledged by the ancient heathens, though invisible and imperceptible to their senses. This doctrine is as extensive as the belief of the existence of a Supreme Being. It has never been called in question by any who have any religion at all.

As to their number, it is beyond all human computation. King David says, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." Also our Lord said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to

My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" And St. John the Revelator speaks of "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands."

SECTION II.

In Scripture angels are called "spirits." The psalmist, speaking of the dignity, power, and majesty of God, who is clothed with light as with a garment, and who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind, then adds, "Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire."

These spiritual intelligences possess moral and natural perfections. They have much knowledge. Their wisdom is vastly extended. In the Second Book of Samuel, King David is spoken of as having "the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."

Angels know much of God, and behold bright displays of His glory, which is evident from what the Lord said unto Job, "out of the whirlwind," referring to the birth of nature, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The great power of angels was exhibited

in the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, also in the destruction of the Assyrians. "The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four-score and five thousand." This was a wonderful display of their power in the slaughter of a vile people, whose cup of iniquity was full, and the overwhelming judgments of God dropped upon them; and angels were made the executioners of His righteous judgments.

SECTION III.

The inhabitants of heaven are composed of angels who kept their first estate, and glorified saints. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, by St. John, they are represented under two characters—that of "beasts and elders." Many theologians suppose these to represent ministers and members of the Church of Christ; but whether this be the true representation or not, it is evident they are the redeemed of the Lord, who sung a new song composed on the blessings of the Gospel which was opened on earth.

St. John says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to

God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The Gospel is called a "new song." The psalmist, in a prophetic tone, referring to Gospel days, exclaimed, "O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day." And the Prophet Isaiah, in almost the same words, exclaimed, "O sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth."

SECTION IV.

None but the redeemed could sing the new song, the song of Redemption; for it is written, "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." They were redeemed by the blood of Christ, who "obtained eternal redemption for us."

SECTION V.

St. Paul declares that Jesus Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The redeemed in heaven began the song. "They sung a new song," and took the lead in worship, and were nearest the throne. It is written, "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." Then, it appears, the angels, elders and all, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, joined in singing the high praises of "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." No doubt, harmony was observed throughout the whole assembly, composed of the glorified millions of saints and angels.

SECTION VI.

Now as to the object they worshipped; the Scriptures inform us it was "the Lamb that was slain," who was "worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." From this we may understand that Jesus Christ is worthy to have ascribed to Him "omnipotence, beneficence, power, the highest reputation for what He has done for the salvation of a lost world." He is worthy of the most thankful acknowledgment of the whole creation for what He endured on

Mount Calvary in retrieving the lost condition of the human race.

By a figurative speech in Scripture, "every creature in heaven and on earth," and in all parts of creation, animate and inanimate, is represented as engaged in praising the Lord Jesus Christ, "by whom were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created for Him, and by Him."

SECTION VII.

It is worthy of observation that the whole assembly in heaven, and all creation, give the same praise, and offer the same worship, and in the same terms, to Jesus Christ, as they give to God the Father, who sits on the throne.

If Jesus Christ were not God, this would be idolatry. But the truth of the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, though mysterious, and to us incomprehensible, yet is established and confirmed by the unalterable word of God. By the Prophet Isaiah, He is called the "Mighty God." And in the Gospel by St. John, He is called "God." And the Apostle Paul exhorted his brethren to take heed to themselves, and "watch over

the flock of God. which He purchased with His own blood." And in the First Epistle of St. John, He is called "the true God and Eternal Life."

This doctrine is also confirmed by His works. All things were made by Him. And the Apostle Paul declares, "By Him all things consist." Now if He created all things, and is the upholder of the universe, He must be God.

Also, we may consider His perfections. He is eternal. It is written, His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And He is omnipresent; for though He ascended into heaven, and sits upon a throne high and lifted up; yet He is, according to His promise, with His people wherever assembled on earth.

He is omniscient. When our Lord interrogated Peter, in regard to his love for Him, he replied, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." And the Apostle Paul declares that "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight." He knows our thoughts before they are formed within us. He can search the deepest emotions of the soul, and the inmost recess of every heart. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

SECTION VIII.

Another proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ is, that He is omnipotent. All power is in His hand; when He speaks He fills eternity. In the Holy Scriptures He is called the "Almighty." And also the language of inspiration is, "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands."

Jesus Christ has ever been worshipped in the church on earth. Therefore, if there is any truth at all in Christianity in any form, Christ is God. Also, saints have always prayed to Him. The church of God at Corinth "called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." And when the sainted Stephen was stoned, in his last moments he called upon "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Our Lord was not only worshipped by saints of old, and by all true saints now upon earth, but by the angelic host above. The language of inspiration is, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

And St. John declares that, "after this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed

with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The glorified saints and angels worship Christ, and it would be absurd to suppose there is idolatry in heaven. If Christ is not God, it is idolatry to offer to Him Divine adoration.

The Scriptures also inform us that none can forgive sins but God alone; and of our Saviour it is written, "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And, while on earth, our Saviour said, "Go, thy sins are forgiven thee." If none but God can forgive sins, and Christ forgave sins, therefore Christ is God.

SECTION IX.

The heavenly host do not offer blind worship, or ignorant devotion; but these pure and spiritual intelligences worship the true object of devotion as becometh wise, spiritual, and holy beings; and all join in loud voices of thanksgiving and praise to Him that loved and redeemed His people.

And St. John the Divine, in his revelation upon the isle of Patmos, saw in heaven "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and

people, and tongues," who "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Saints on earth, and the spirits of departed saints in heaven, all unite in one general anthem of praise, and in a loud burst of Hallelujah, thus praising the Lord without one dissenting voice. In heaven they praise God with loud voices. We do not read of silence in heaven more than half an hour. There are no idle tongues there; but with loud voices they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And on earth we should praise Him in noble strains; not only whisper His praises, or sit silently musing upon His glory, His goodness, and mercy, with hearts uplifted to Him in thanksgiving and praise, but also praise the Lord with loud voices. The emissaries of Satan make a great noise in this world; and saints should not be hushed into silence. They cannot be made happy by making a noise, therefore they need not make a noise to become happy; but if under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, as on the day of Pente-

cost, they are filled with joy in the Holy Ghost, then let it come,—“Hallelujah !”

CHAPTER XVI.

SOUL AND SPIRIT.

1. SOUL and Spirit ; inferior animals have spirit, not soul.
2. Doctrine of Trinity not to be denied.
3. Man created in likeness of his Creator.
4. Soul immaterial.
5. Exposed to ills in life.
6. Value of soul ; its beauty ; its redemption precious.

SECTION I.

As we have no materials by which we can form adequate conceptions of immaterial substances, the metaphysician is bewildered on entering this field for contemplation. Some suppose when we speak of the soul,—that spiritual, reasonable, and immortal substance in man, which is the source of our thoughts and reasonings,—it implies or refers to the will and affections, and the spirit to the understanding. But let that be as it may, one thing is certain, that is, if we feel affection for our Creator, or our fellow creatures, we keenly realize a drawing sensation about the heart ; and if we attempt to solve a

problem, we often, almost involuntarily, rub the forehead, as if the head was the seat of the spirit, and the source of our understanding, reasonings, and thoughts ; and the heart the seat of the soul and its affections: all of which may be founded only on conjecture.

In the Holy Scriptures the conjunction "and" often occurs between "soul" and "spirit." One of old said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, *and* my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." And the Apostle Paul declares that the word of God is "quick and powerful, dividing asunder the soul *and* spirit." From this it appears evident there is a distinction between soul and spirit. Also, from Scripture it appears equally evident that inferior animals have a spirit ; but no one would suppose that they possess a reasonable soul. The wise man Solomon says, "The spirit of a beast goes downward, but the spirit of a man goeth upward."

We conclude, therefore, while inferior animals have a spirit, man, the noblest work of creation, possesses an immortal soul and spirit. If we consider man as possessing a soul, body, and spirit, we find as many difficulties in searching for the connecting link that unites his soul to his body, as in searching for the distinction between the soul and spirit.

To view this subject metaphysically, it is intricate and obscure; but that is no reason why we should doubt the distinction between the soul and spirit, or entertain the slightest doubt that these two immaterialities are united to a material body, to constitute a living, intelligent human being. We know we exist; but how we exist we know not.

SECTION II.

From the tenor of the word of God, the doctrine of the Trinity is fully established. There are some in the world, nevertheless, who deny the truth of this doctrine, because they cannot comprehend it; and they say human reason is prone to deride it. But if it is *fair* to deny the truth of a doctrine, because we cannot comprehend it, then we may deny the truth of our own existence. There is as great a mystery involved in the fact, that man possesses a soul, body, and spirit, and that these three (one material and two immaterial substances united) constitute one living man, as there is in the doctrine of the Trinity, which is set forth and confirmed in the word of God.

How it is that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one, and these united in *One* constitute the one undivided *Jehovah*, is to us unsearchable and incomprehensible; and

so are the facts connected with our own existence. We should not doubt the truth of one of these doctrines, because of the mysteries surrounding it, and admit the other, to us equally mysterious and incomprehensible.

Till we can fully understand our own existence, and know how we exist, we should not doubt the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, merely because we cannot fully comprehend it.

SECTION III.

Whether we admit one material and two immaterial substances united in and constituting one rational intelligent human being, or not, the Holy Scriptures inform us that man was created in "the likeness and image" of his Creator; that is, this spiritual principle in man is immaterial, invisible, active, intelligent, free, and immortal, capable of discernment, judgment, choice, and affection, and possessed of knowledge; and, in man's primitive state, pure, holy, and righteous; resembling God in all that is wise, holy, and good. In this state man was perfectly happy, and was crowned with the honours of immortality, but subsequently fell from this state of rectitude, and lost the image and favour of God.

SECTION IV.

When we read that man was created in the image of God, we are to understand it in a limited sense. In some particulars no created being can bear any resemblance to the great Creator. For instance, in self-existence, independence, immutability, and supremacy,—all these are incommunicable attributes, in which neither men nor angels can bear any resemblance to God.

But we are to understand it as it refers to God's moral image. God is a Spirit, therefore invisible. Although He pervades, influences, actuates, and governs the whole universe, He is only seen by His works.

So with the soul of man. It is invisible, because it is immaterial; but still it is intelligent. The Apostle Paul says, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

This immaterial part of man, although it inhabits his material *frame*, and influences, actuates, and governs all his senses, members, and actions, still it is invisible, and can only be perceived by its operations and effects. Thinking, understanding, and reasoning are not the soul, they are its actions, not its essence.

SECTION V.

The soul of man was created pure and active, and capable of perfect judgment and memory, and at perfect liberty to choose good or evil. In this state man was perfectly happy; but by a voluntary transgression of a sacred law, he fell from this state of purity, holiness, and happiness, lost the favour of God, and became exposed to every ill in life, subject to death, and exposed to hell.

From our corrupt nature, derived from our progenitors, flow all our evil thoughts, words, desires, and wicked deeds. These are the natural products of internal corruption, from which we must be delivered by regeneration and pardon, or be crushed under its accumulating guilt, and doomed to roam in despair for ever and ever.

From all this inward corruption, inward and outward sin, we must be redeemed and saved, or be lost for ever. Nothing impure or unholy can enter into the presence of God, or dwell for a moment in that holy place where He resides.

SECTION VI.

It is impossible for us to fully estimate the value of the soul. Diamonds being scarce, they are therefore prized the more

highly. If we by this rule reckon on the inestimable value of the soul, who can tell its worth? for although there be thousands on earth, and millions in heaven, we who are in a state of probation, have each but one soul to save or lose! If we lose that, all will be gone for ever.

The whole world appears to be turning around on the pivot of the appearance of things. Almost anything—or we may more properly say every thing—is estimated in value in proportion to its beauty. And if so, how precious and valuable is the soul, created pure, and though invisible, resembling its Creator in every thing just and good, holy and happy!

Again, we estimate the real value of things in proportion to their durability. We may be in possession of any thing,—no matter how beautiful in appearance, if it is of short duration, a thing of a moment, we account it of but little value. But the soul is of infinite value, because it is of infinite duration.

We also estimate the value of things we may possess in proportion to the good purposes to which they may be applied. If we reckon on this score, no one can estimate the full value of the soul, for we were created to glorify God. Now, if we attend

to the requirements of the Gospel, and obey the commands of God, we may answer the end of our creation, and glorify Him on earth, and, through the death and sufferings of Christ on Mount Calvary, at last mingle with the glorified millions in heaven, and join in the ineffable song of praise to God and the Lamb for ever.

The value of the soul may also be inferred from the words of the psalmist, who declares that "the redemption of the soul is precious." Precious, because none but Christ could redeem it. Man had violated a sacred law, and was under the penalty of death. The stern demands of inflexible justice required satisfaction. Nothing short of a sacrifice of infinite merit could reach his case. Men or angels could give no such sacrifice. They might suffer, but in their sufferings there would be no efficacy. A finite creature cannot by any amount of sufferings make an atonement of infinite merit. But in due time Christ died to retrieve our affairs, and made an ample atonement for the sins of the whole world. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people:" and now we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Him."

The worth of the soul may also be in-

ferred from the price of its redemption. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. And to redeem our poor sin-polluted souls, He voluntarily suffered all the penalty, pain, and anguish due to our crimes.

It is written, "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." He suffered "the just for the unjust." He was made perfect by a state of sufferings, that He, as the Captain of our Salvation, might bring many sons to glory. To accomplish the great work of human redemption, His sufferings and His dreadful agony on Mount Calvary were more than any mere mortal could endure. And when he expired, under the weight of human guilt and woe, the dreadful scene was such, that the sun could not behold it without blushing. The heavens were shrouded in sackcloth of thickest blackest midnight at high noon. And an earthquake terribly shook the nations of the earth, splitting the rocks, rending the veil of the temple, and disturbing the repose of the dead, causing them to roll out of their winding sheets, to witness the awful catastrophe upon earth. The mighty shock staggered the hearts of the most obdurate sinners. Every angel seemed to stand aloof. And it appeared as if the Divine presence was withdrawn from the suffering

Son of God while extended upon the cross. In this sad, this inconceivable condition, the dying Saviour, filled with trembling because of these judgments, cried out like one in deep agony and despair, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He bowed His head, and said, "It is finished."

If all this was for the redemption of our souls, what a debt of gratitude do we owe to Him who suffered for us! We should consecrate all we have, and all we are, upon the altars of the Lord, accept Him as our Saviour, that we may enjoy the benefits of the atonement, the favour of God, and the joys of heaven.

The merits of Christ are our strong rampart against the wrath of God. But we must throw overboard all our own righteousness, and swim to glory on the single plank of free grace through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, and not wait till the hour of death before we commence the dignity of rational beings. All eternity with us may rest on the decision of this moment. Decide for Christ; imitate Him through life; and heaven and glory are yours for ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST.

1. CONFORMITY to Christ's death; to His life and resurrection. 2. Power of Christ's resurrection. 3. How made perfect in holiness; renewing grace. 4. Christ lives to intercede. 5. Life of believers derived from Christ. 6. Christ accomplished work of redemption. 7. Meritorious and efficient cause of life in believers. 8. How sin subdued. 9. Fruit of Christ's merit. 10. Death of sin affords pleasure. 11. Advantage from suffering for Christ. 12. An honour to suffer for Christ.

SECTION I.

IN the former chapter we endeavoured to show, Christ died to redeem us. If so, we should be conformed to His life.

Conformity to Christ in His life implies a knowledge of the "power of His resurrection." The Apostle Paul says, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable to His death."

Conformity to Christ's death, or, in other words, dying to sin, is absolutely necessary that we may be conformed to His life in righteousness and true holiness. But our conformity to His life and resurrection is mentioned first, because we should first

know what is our hope and end, before we resolve on dying to sin and to the world.

Till we live the new life, and are quickened with a desire and hope of glory, we cannot be active in resisting the adversary and mortifying sin; nor can we properly encounter sufferings for Christ's sake.

The new life is the principle; and the hope of glory the end; and the patient continuance in well doing is the way, and the only way, to attain the end.

SECTION II.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection implies practical and operative knowledge, such as includes sense and experience of the thing known.

The power of His resurrection is that by which we are raised to a state of glory. The Spirit of Christ raises us up from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. Christ raised from the dead gives us, in a mysterious way, the spirit of life that shall be perfected in heaven.

We shall know Him and the power of His resurrection more fully hereafter, when we are raised by Him to eternal life and glory. But we know Him and the power of His resurrection here, when we experience His Divine nature, and the mighty influences

of His grace in renewing all the ransomed powers of our soul.

As we know the power of His death when sin is mortified, and the "old man" in us is crucified; so we know the power of His resurrection when we feel the operation and virtue of His Holy Spirit quickening us to newness of life; being "buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

SECTION III.

The Apostle Paul gives an account of his self-denial and sincerity. What he accounts great gain,—even so much that he esteemed all things but loss in comparison with it,—was, not only to know Christ and obtain justification by Him, but Christ and sanctification by Him. To desire to be found in Christ, and to be justified by Him, is agreed to by many. For all desire happiness, and freedom from the penalties of the law; but few value the sacred influences of saving grace and a life of holiness. For this the apostle counted all things loss, even dross, that he might know Christ and the power of His

resurrection. In this he is a pattern, and an example for all true Christians.

All true Christians earnestly desire to be sensible of the power of Christ's resurrection, and have the experience of it within themselves.

But it may be asked, How our conformity to Christ in holiness of life may be said to flow from the power of Christ's resurrection? We answer, This power is exerted in our regeneration, and carried on in a work of sanctification, until we become perfect in holiness.

In our regeneration He bestows upon us new life,—a spiritual life; and this is ascribed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; because His resurrection is not only the example and pattern of it, but the pledge and meritorious cause of the life, both of grace and glory in His people; for "He hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Our Saviour has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Having spiritual life, wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him, our understanding being enlightened, we "know what is the hope of His calling," "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which

He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead."

This new life is not only an obligation to live in all purity and holiness to the glory of God ; but an inclination or a power to do so ; for we live to God if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us."

The profession of the name of Christ into which we are baptized, infers an obligation to a new life. But the actual indwelling of the Spirit in us implies an inclination, power, or ability to walk with God in all newness of life and conversation.

We receive this Spirit, or renewing grace, from Jesus Christ ; for it is "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We have it from Him as the Second Adam, or head of the new creation. As the first Adam was by his sin the cause of spiritual death, (for in Him we all sinned,) and our own actual sins degrading us still lower in a state of bondage and spiritual death ; so Jesus Christ is the root, foundation, and meritorious cause of all that grace which we receive. "For even as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." He verily is the Second Adam.



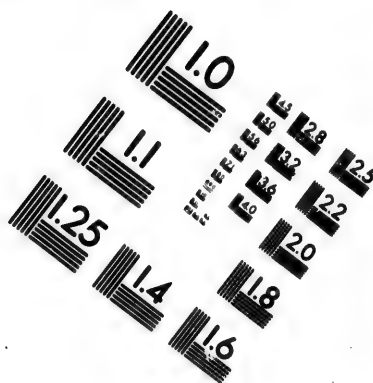
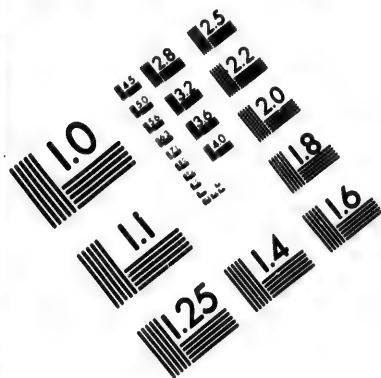
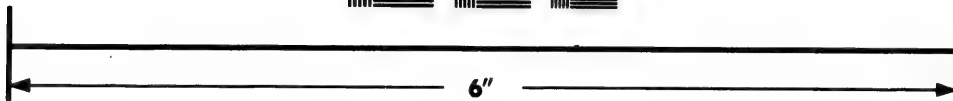
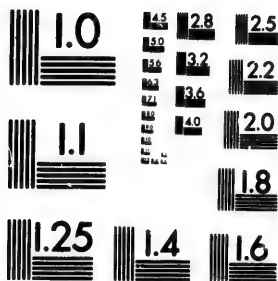


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This gift of the Spirit is procured for us by the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, who satisfied Divine justice, and opened the way for mercy to be bestowed upon us freely in a way suitable to the honour and majesty of God.

What was lost in Adam is recovered in Christ, who made a propitiation for our sins, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

SECTION IV.

Though this Spirit and renewing grace were purchased by Christ's death, it is conveyed and applied to us with a special regard to His resurrection. This is frequently declared in the Holy Scriptures. It is called "the power of His resurrection;" for by the same power by which Christ was quickened and raised, we are quickened and raised also every one in his own time.

That Spirit and power by which Christ was raised out of the grave, is the very efficient cause of our quickening, or being born of the Spirit, for the blessings purchased by Christ's death are applied to us by Him, who is now alive, and lives to intercede for us. Therefore it is said, that God hath be-

gotten us to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. By that power which He has, having risen from the dead, He shows forth "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." The same power works in believers which wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

SECTION V.

Christ risen and living in heaven is the fountain of life in all true believers. He is the great Source of grace, and sends it out by His Spirit. Therefore our life is made dependent on His. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." The life of believers is derived from Christ who is our quickening head. He communicates life and virtue to all His members. There is a virtue in His life to quicken us; so that we do not live so much as Christ liveth in us. The apostle says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We live in Him as the branches live in the vine.

SECTION VI.

Moreover, by the resurrection of Christ, it is manifest, that He has accomplished the

great work of human redemption, and that God the Father accepted the sacrifice He made. If He had not fully completed His work in the redemption of the world, we have no reason to suppose He would ever have been released from the prison of the grave. But having accomplished His great and benevolent undertaking, He is now "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Also His resurrection from the grave is an earnest and pledge of our own resurrection from the dead. As He died, so He rose again, having satisfied the justice of God, and procured grace for us, to enable us to overcome all our spiritual foes. He is therefore called the first fruits from the dead.

He rose by His own power to immortal life. So by the same power He will raise and quicken us, that we may live a life of holiness in conformity to His will in this world, and in the next a life of glory; for "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto

His glorious body." The beginning, the progress, and the perfection of our conformity to Christ, in a life of holiness, flows from, and depends upon, the power of Christ's resurrection, both as to the meritorious and the efficient cause. And this is what the Apostle Paul desired above all things to know experimentally, and to be more and more sensible of the power of Christ, and the end for which He died and rose again.

Let us therefore seek after this experimental knowledge of Christ's saving grace and power, labouring to be holy as He is holy, and righteous as He is righteous, accounting His will and glory the great end of our life; just, benevolent, and beneficent towards all men, always striving to do good, and studying to promote our conformity to Christ in all manner of conversation. For "he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked."

SECTION VII.

We should also try ourselves whether we have any experimental knowledge of the power of Christ's resurrection; but in so doing, we should look for this experience in a way of sanctification and holiness, in which we will find comfort and delight.

Sin is the true cause of all our trouble and sorrow ; but, when mortified and subdued, we have an experimental knowledge of Christ working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

If the Spirit of God possesses our hearts, and we receive His image and nature, we will be inclined to love Him, and then it will be our delight to do His will in all things.

Conformity to Christ in His death is no less necessary to be sought after than conformity to His life. They are inseparable duties and privileges to be performed and enjoyed, by which we will be enabled more and more to live to God and die to sin. It is the same principle of grace and holiness.

Christ's death is the meritorious cause of this life in the believer, and His Spirit, or "the power of His resurrection," is the efficient cause of it, both in our regeneration and in the progress of our sanctification ; and therefore our conformity to Christ is said to flow from "the power of His resurrection."

What we should seek after is, First, a spiritual inward conformity to Christ by the death of sin ; and, Secondly, an outward conformity to Him in suffering according to His will, and thus bearing the cross.

The apostle had much experience of the power of Christ in both these respects, but he evidently desired and laboured to know more. Let us strive to imitate him.

SECTION VIII.

We are made conformable to Christ by the crucifixion and death of sin. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Sometimes the destruction of sin is called "a mortifying of sin." This implies a gradual weakening of its power and putting it to death; or, it implies the crucifying and killing the love of sin in our souls, which is sometimes also called "a ceasing of sin." Being "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

By this we show our conformity and likeness to Christ's crucifixion, because it expresses the nature of the thing itself, for with the cross we contemplate pain and death. In like manner, sin is weakened by godly sorrow, which is one spiritual means to check our sensual inclinations, and mortify and crucify the love of worldly pleasures, and the strength and life of sin in our souls.

If fastened to a cross, our sufferings and pain would be great, our blood dropping out by degrees, our strength would waste, and our life would fail. So sin is not subdued, but by constant, painful, and thorough endeavours. Not by feeding the flesh with carnal delights, and indulging in the pleasures of sin; but, by thwarting it, watching and striving against it, by mourning over our sins with a godly sorrow, and persevering in this warfare till the love of it is not only weakened, but overpowered and dead. As the power of sin is weakened, the power of grace is proportionately increased and strengthened, and we are thereby enabled to live to God, and are made conformable to Christ both in His death and His resurrection.

SECTION IX.

Christ died, not only to expiate our guilt, but to afford His grace and Spirit, that we might crucify sin, resist and overcome it. He "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Now what the Apostle Paul desired, and what every true Christian should desire, is, to know experimentally more and more of the influence of Christ's death, and

the fruit of His merit in the destruction of sin.

Christ died for our sins, therefore we should conform ourselves to His death by dying to sin. This duty is ours, but the grace and strength to do so is from Him. Therefore, in humble dependence upon His merits, power, and goodness, we should diligently use all the means proper to attain this great end. The work may be tedious and painful, for sin will not die without constant and vigorous struggling against it: we must be patient, but assiduous also, and persevere to the end; for we make it more painful by dealing negligently in this great business; and, by neglect, our vexation and danger will be increased. The longer the Canaanites are permitted to live with us, the more they will prove a thorn in our sides.

SECTION X.

Our love for sin increases our affliction; but our troubles end and our delights increase as we bring ourselves by grace to a thorough and effectual resolution to forsake all sin; and no delight is more pleasing than to hold in sovereign contempt the vain and sinful delights of the world: the death of sin puts an end to these, and affords un-

bounded pleasure. There is really a secret pleasure in mourning over our imperfections, and chanting the victory over our sins. The true believer can then say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

There is an outward conformity to Christ in bearing the cross, or a "fellowship" with Him in sufferings. It is called "fellowship" because of the strict union betwixt Christ and believers: they make a mystical body. He is the head, they are the members. He partakes of their sufferings, and they partake of His Spirit. And when they suffer for Him, they enjoy more of His presence and Spirit, communicating to them still larger measures of comfort and support.

There is nothing in our suffering that will expiate sin, nothing meritorious in the most faithful believer in Christ: but the sufferings of His servants are for His honour, and the means of making them more conformable to Him. Therefore the Apostle Paul was willing and ready to suffer and die for Christ's sake, that he might be made conformable to His death.

And in like manner all who would be partakers of Christ by faith, should expect to suffer for His sake. For "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him." This affords ample opportunity for the spiritual improvement of His children; and if we be His children, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

We must be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, if we would be partakers of His glory. We must be willing to bear the cross for His sake, if we would wear the crown. We must be like Him whom we have chosen for our head and Lord, holy as He was holy, and afflicted as He was afflicted, when He calls us to suffer for Him.

SECTION XI.

It is evident that the Apostle Paul reckoned sufferings for Christ advantageous. To be sure afflictions, considered in the abstract, are grievous to our nature; but sufferings for Christ are an advantage, and on several accounts blessings in disguise.

Courage and patience to endure these sufferings is the special gift of God. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suf-

fer for His sake." Bare suffering is not more than is believing, but believing and suffering too is an honour vouchsafed to the children of God : it is given to them all to believe ; but some are called to suffer more than others ; on these greater honour is conferred, and more grace is given.

Advantages arising from these sufferings on the part of believers are, patience, and holiness, conformity to the will of Christ, and fellowship with Him ; leading to joy and comfort more desirable and valuable than worldly pleasures or worldly gain.

They are also advantageous on account of their end, and the fruit they produce. In this life these afflictions promote our dying to sin and the world, by which we are made to feel more of the virtue of Christ's death, and the power of His resurrection. The apostle says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

We should rejoice in being partakers of Christ's sufferings, "that when His glory shall be revealed we may be glad also, and rejoice with exceeding joy."

SECTION XII.

A devout follower of Christ feels unlimited

resignation to Him, and patiently submits to any sufferings or afflictions for His cause. This fellowship in His sufferings makes us conformable to His death.

Now if Providence calls us to suffer for the cause of our Great Redeemer, we should count it an honour. After the apostles had been beaten by the Jews, they "departed out of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." This is the true spirit of Christians, to be willing to do and suffer all things for Christ. The Apostle Peter says, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

It is a pleasing consideration that all the ills, sufferings, and afflictions of Christians in this world are not hell; and yet, if we prove faithful, and endure hardness as good soldiers, it is all the hell we shall ever have to suffer. And let us not forget that our light afflictions here will work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. The road to heaven may be rough; but, bless the Lord, we shall find it a good place when we arrive there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRUE HAPPINESS.

1. In what true happiness consists. 2. Glorified saints have manifestations of grace; righteous admitted into presence of God. 3. Cause of joy. 4. Knowledge of God and Divine things enlarged, and more clear. 5. On what true happiness depends. 6. In what happiness consists. 7. To be with Christ. 8. Place and company. 9. Joys of heaven complete. 10. Folly of neglecting to secure happiness.

SECTION I.

IN the former chapter we endeavoured to show what is implied in conformity to Christ, which alone can constitute us happy. We will now notice in what that happiness consists.

It is generally admitted as a fact, that happiness consists in the gratification of our desires. So far as our desires are gratified, we are so far happy. If, after we obtain one desired object, we could extend our desires no farther, we should be completely happy. But after we obtain one desired object, we extend our desires to another; and if, by frugality and industry, we gain that, we immediately extend our

desires to another, and then to another, and so on, as the case may be; and as desire is one of the cardinal faculties of the soul, it is capable of infinite extension: therefore we may extend our desires from one object to another without bounds or limitation; and while we continue to centre our affections on, and extend our desires to, created objects, we can never be completely happy. True happiness can only be found in the service and favour of God, by setting the Lord always before us. This is one trait in the character of the righteous. They set the Lord always before them, and act always as seeing Him who is invisible; then when all the faculties of the soul, the powers of the mind, and the affections and desires of the heart, go out after the Lord, centre upon and harmonize in Him, we participate in the fulness of eternal happiness. We have at once a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

The Lord will guide His people during their pilgrimage in this world, comfort them in the hour of death, and bring them to glory in a future state, where in His presence "there is fulness of joy," and at His right hand "there are pleasures for evermore."

SECTION II.

In heaven, God will grant the glorified saints uninterrupted and eternally satisfying manifestations of His grace and favour. They will then be able to comprehend what is implied in fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, at the right hand of God, which signifies not only a state of honour, but consummate happiness, where saints dwell with Christ their Saviour, in a world of light and glory.

In the holy Scriptures, "fulness of joy" and everlasting pleasures are mentioned in opposition to the empty and unsatisfying joys of the transient and painful pleasures of this present life.

The righteous shall be admitted into the most glorious presence of God, to enjoy a complete and satisfying happiness for evermore. The joy of the glorified saints in heaven will verily be complete and everlasting. This doctrine is warranted in the word of God. Our Saviour, speaking of the end of the world, said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any

more pain ; for the former things will have passed away."

SECTION III.

In heaven there will be a full and final deliverance from everything that is evil ; and there will be the presence and enjoyment of all good. The inexhaustible fountain and cause of the joys of the glorified in heaven, is the glorious manifestations of the love and favour of God, shining into the soul, and a realization of this love, which cannot fail to afford true happiness to those who are united to Christ, conformed to Him, and admitted into His glorious presence.

In this life we see dimly, as through a glass ; but in heaven God will reveal Himself, in as full and satisfying a manner as a glorified spirit, in a state of perfection, will be able to receive, which cannot fail to produce a fulness of unspeakable and satisfying joy for evermore.

What mighty joy and pleasure will it afford the saints to know that they are perfectly freed from all sin, and from all the effects, power, and pollution of it ; and that they are secured from all danger of sinning and sorrowing any more ! There shall be no more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death, on that blissful shore, where all

will be peace and comfort in a world of felicity and unutterable joy.

SECTION IV.

The joy of saints in heaven must be exceedingly great when they find themselves perfected, and in a state of consummate grace, in full conformity to the will of God.

Then our capacity to know the things of God will be greatly enlarged, and our knowledge of His nature, His works, and providences vastly increased. And this knowledge will be clear, distinct, and easy, as it were, by intuition,—looking into the object. There will be no laborious study in heaven, such as our present distant and imperfect state requires; though, no doubt, there will be further inquiry, and further discoveries for further improvement. The saints will continue to climax alike in glory and wisdom.

And as the powers of the soul will then be perfected, so the will and affections will be wholly sanctified and conformed to the Divine nature. Love, humility, meekness, resignation, joy, and every other grace will then be perfected. There will be every grace without any mixture. Their desires will be satisfied so as never to grudge another's portion, nor aspire with uneasiness after a higher station. In the presence of the Lord

there is fulness of joy ; for our utmost desires shall then be fully satisfied.

In this world our most lively endeavours in religion are but a vigorous effort to throw off a dead weight and burden of corruption ; but there all the powers of the soul will be pure and holy. No darkness or shade of gloom in the mind ; no disorder in the heart. Every temper and disposition of the soul will be happy and harmonious. Ineffable must the joy and pleasure of the blessed be, to find themselves in such a state ! And such are the glories of the upper world,—such the happiness of the pure in heart.

SECTION V.

To make us truly happy, more depends on the inward disposition of the mind, than on our outward circumstances. The joy and pleasure of saints in heaven will, in a great degree, consist in the happy and peaceful state of their minds, and the calm and heavenly temper of their souls. All will be heavenly and Divine. Their hearts will be always in tune for such exercises and enjoyments as suit that pure and holy state. Never disturbed with any corruptions, nor hurried with any unholy passions ; no clouds in the mind, nor tumult in the affections ;

but an entire perfect rectitude in desire, thought, and deed.

SECTION VI.

The joy and pleasure of the glorified in heaven will also greatly consist in their employment. They shall rest from all their work, care, and toil in this life, but, no doubt, will be exercised so as not to abate, but increase, their happiness.

It is now our work to resign ourselves to the Lord, and fully consecrate ourselves to Him. This is often done sincerely, but so imperfectly that we still find cause to perform this duty over and over again; but then we shall be resigned, and the heart wrought up to an unreserved and absolute subjection and true obedience to God, to worship and serve Him. We shall love Him with all our heart and soul, worship and praise Him in an exalted and heavenly manner.

What pleasure do these exercises afford to the saints on earth! And how will their joy and pleasure be heightened in heaven, where in His presence there is fulness of joy!

SECTION VII.

But the greatest pleasure will consist in being with Christ in heaven, in conversing

with and enjoying our glorified Redeemer. This we may confidently expect. Our Saviour said, "Where I am, there shall My servant be;" and also He said, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." O, then we shall see the King in His beauty—see Him in His exalted station; see Him upon His throne, surrounded with angels and worshipping saints, receiving honour and distinction due to Him for all He has done in completing the great work of human redemption.

SECTION VIII.

The place where they dwell will be a source of joy and pleasure to the redeemed in heaven. The New Jerusalem, the city of the great King—the city of the living God.

Great joy and pleasure will consist, also, in the company; the general assembly—the church of the firstborn—an innumerable company of angels. There the saints sit down and converse with all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, in the kingdom of God. And O, how ravishing must be the delights of such a society! Nor will the angels refuse to admit us to their society.

Also, the pleasure of a spiritual body immortal and glorious, fashioned after the likeness of Christ's glorious body: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

The beatific vision, the light and favour of God, will continually fill the mind, and invigorate every faculty with joy and strength, in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy. It cannot be otherwise, when all the desires of the heart are fully satisfied, and the soul unutterably full of glory and of God.

SECTION IX.

The joy of heaven will be complete and everlasting, without diminution or end. The number of professors cannot lessen it. The Divine presence is an infinite, inexhaustible spring of pleasure, equally full, free, and open to all, and abundantly sufficient to satisfy their most enlarged desires.

The causes of this joy are always equal. The goodness and love of God, and the merits of Christ, the purposes and promises of God, cannot fail; therefore the joy and pleasure of the blessed in the kingdom of heaven shall be complete and everlasting.

They shall flutter from one mountain of glory to another, and for ever range the hills of immortality in the sunlight of heaven.

SECTION X.

It is both madness and folly in those who neglect or refuse such happiness, by the favour of God, offered without money and without price.

There cannot be greater folly than to prefer transient, empty, and unsatisfying pleasures, to those that are complete, full, free, satisfying, and eternal. We should not prefer the gratifying our own corrupt affections and dispositions, to the love and favour of God. The consideration of these pleasures, as well as our duty to love and serve God, should excite us at once to apply ourselves most heartily in the use of the proper means to attain this happiness. Let us study to be holy in heart and in life; then we may hope to be partakers of the joy and pleasures that are at God's right hand for ever more. Holiness is the prolific soil from which happiness is a spontaneous growth. To be holy is to be happy. Through the merits of Christ, and strength of grace freely offered, all may attain to that state of holiness, that will enable them.

to attain to happiness in this life, and realize consummate felicity, everlasting and eternal joys, at God's right hand above.

But to attain to this state of felicity, we have something to do. It is provided for us, but we must seek to obtain it. If we do not desire it, we will not seek for it. But we may desire it, and yet come short of it. We must seek if we would find. Our salvation is suspended on the condition of obedience to God, through faith in Jesus Christ. We are to be co-workers with God, and work out our salvation. We cannot be saved by our good works, nor can we be saved without them. Though we cannot earn heaven by anything we can do, yet we have something to do to gain heaven. The farmer cannot make his corn grow, but he can plough the ground and sow the seed; without which it would be presumptuous to expect a plentiful harvest. So it is in spiritual things. We must use the means to obtain the end, or suffer the consequences. If the children of Israel had refused or neglected to gather manna, they would have perished in the wilderness. It is the same in spiritual things. If we refuse or neglect to gather spiritual food, we will perish, while there is bread enough in our Father's house, and to spare.

CHAPTER XIX.

BREAD FROM HEAVEN.

1. CHILDREN of Israel depart from Egypt; manna descended. 2. Manna, type of Christ. 3. Manna, when Israelites were needy. 4. When they did not deserve it. 5. The people had to gather it. 6. An every-day work. 7. On the sixth day double portion gathered; none fell on the Sabbath. 8. An abundance. 9. How prepared. 10. Sweet. 11. Despised. 12. Pot of manna preserved. 13. Manna continued till they came to promised land.

SECTION I.

AFTER the children of Israel had left the land of bondage,—passed through the Red Sea,—they saw their enemies, in attempting to pursue them, swallowed in its depths. No doubt they then thought they would be able to pursue their peaceful journey without further interruption. But they soon found they had enemies to encounter, and many hardships and privations to endure.

They had been only about a month and a half on their journey, when their provisions were all consumed; and they were surrounded with the gloomy prospect of perish-

ing in the wilderness. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron." But the Lord had mercy upon them, and supplied their wants. Man did eat angels' food. The Lord rained manna from heaven, and the people gathered it, prepared, and ate it. They "did eat manna forty years, until they came to the land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan."

This was a wonderful manifestation of God's mercy and power, in supplying the wants of His people; and in all this there appears evidently a design to prefigure that spiritual meat presented in the Gospel to poor perishing sinners.

What in substance this manna was, is difficult to determine. It does not appear to have been common in the wilderness. The Israelites never saw it before: "They wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." It had the appearance of "the hoar-frost on the ground." In the Book of Numbers, Moses states that "the manna was as coriander-seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium." It is not probable anything of the kind had ever been seen before; but it seems to have

been created for the express purpose of supplying the wants of the children of Israel, then ready to famish. It was not a production of the earth; it came from heaven. The Lord said unto Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." It appears to have fallen with the dew; for, "when the dew that lay was gone up," then they beheld the manna on the face of the wilderness.

SECTION II.

That the manna was an eminent type of Christ, and the salvation He has provided for us, there can be no doubt. For this, we have no less authority than the words of our Saviour Himself. When our great Redeemer was on earth, many believed on Him not only because of the words He spake, but the miracles He wrought. He raised the dead, healed the sick, and fed a vast multitude with a few loaves and fishes. But the unbelieving Jews said this was no proof of His Divine mission—no proof that He was the promised Messiah; they asked for some other sign or proof of His Messiahship. They said Moses was but a mere man, and he had fed our fathers in the wilderness; that "our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He

gave them bread from heaven to eat." They evidently concluded that Christ did no more, in feeding the multitude, than was done by Moses, who fed the children of Israel with manna in the wilderness. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

The manna with the dew descended from heaven. So Christ is He who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. His grace descends upon His people like dew upon the grass. He feeds them with the bread of life. "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

SECTION III.

This supernatural supply of bread from heaven was mercifully afforded to the children of Israel when they were in great need,—their provisions all consumed; "six hundred thousand men," besides women and children, and a mixed multitude, more than a month's journey in a barren, dreary

wilderness, and without food ; the gloomy prospect of perishing in the wilderness staring them in the face. But in due time an ample provision is made, the manna descends, and their wants are amply supplied. They would inevitably have perished, if God in His abounding mercy had not fed them with bread from heaven.

And at the time our Saviour appeared on earth, such was the forlorn state of the moral world, in open rebellion against God ; and the thunder of His wrath just ready to drop upon a guilty race. The whole world appeared ripe for ruin, and ready to perish. And verily every human soul would have perished, if Christ had not come down from heaven to interpose in our behalf. He gave Himself for the life of the world. " In due time Christ died for the ungodly." A fountain was opened in the house of David, and through the merits and sufferings of Christ on Mount Calvary, ample provision is made to meet the spiritual wants of the whole human family.

SECTION IV.

This miraculous supply of manna was given to the children of Israel when they did not deserve the least indication of God's favour. They were wishing themselves

back in Egypt, and murmuring against Moses and Aaron—the servants of God, and accused them of bringing the people forth into the wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger.

Instead of being grateful to God, for past mercies and deliverance from bondage, they were swelling a tide of murmur and complaint. But in the midst of their ingratitude and rebellion, God mercifully supplied their wants.

And so it was with the moral world, when Christ came to redeem us. Though there were not at that time scenes of carnage and bloodshed, nor such ravages of war as often rock the nations of the earth as by an earthquake,—yet at that time when our Saviour appeared at Jerusalem the whole world was enveloped in moral gloom, steeped in iniquity, and in open rebellion against God. A gross darkness covered the people. The masses of the people were sunken down in the depths of superstition, infidelity, and idolatry. In their highest schools of philosophy, they taught that man's chief happiness consisted in eating, drinking, and in giving full scope to all the propensities of their depraved hearts. Though undeserving of favour, yet in the unbounded mercy of God, at that time, He

sent His Son to redeem and save the world. O! what an unparalleled exertion of benevolence and mercy was this! The wheels of redemption were put in motion, even while men were preferring the *painful* pleasure of sin to the riches of Divine grace and the kingdom of glory.

SECTION V.

God provided the manna; but the children of Israel had to gather it and eat it, or go without it. The first was God's work, the second was their work. "They could not produce the manna, and God would not gather it for them: we cannot do God's work, and He will not do ours."

If the God of nature had not given them feet and hands to enable them to walk out and gather the manna, no doubt other means would have been used to meet their wants. Instead of the manna being scattered over the face of the wilderness, in that case, it probably would have been rained down in their tents, or in their mouths, for aught we know. But as they had the means, and the ability to use the means, to gather it, it was only necessary for it to be placed within their reach; and then, if they were too indolent or obstinate to gather it, they might bear the consequences.

The people were not only to gather the manna, but it was to be a morning work, for, "when the sun waxed hot, it melted away." If they neglected to gather manna in the morning, they were doomed to fast *that day*.

The Lord could, by less than the turn of His finger, give the husbandman a plentiful harvest, without his ploughing the ground and sowing the seed; but it would be presumptuous to ask or hope for that to be done, to indulge the indolent or obstinate. But we must till the soil, and sow the seed; thus use the means, and trust in the Lord, for the early and latter rains, and the warming rays of the sun: *then* we may reasonably hope for an abundant harvest; for the Lord sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust.

And so it is in spiritual things. God has made a rich, free, full, and ample provision for all the sons and daughters of Adam. Jesus Christ having suffered on Mount Calvary, and, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," now all are invited to come and partake of the bread of life sent down from heaven,—the blessings presented in the Gospel,—all the benefits of the Atonement.

But the blessings presented in the Gospel,

the bread of life, can only be obtained on condition of our obedience to the requirements of the Gospel,—our trust in the merits of Christ,—receiving Him as our only Saviour, and our entire consecration to the will and service of God.

We are commanded to “work out our salvation,” and turn from our sins. Also, we are invited to “come to Christ.” From this it appears we have something to do, that we may obtain the bread of life. There is “bread in our father’s house, and to spare;” but those who are too indolent or obstinate to use the appointed means can never obtain the end, even though they may desire it. If the children of Israel had continued to desire bread, but neglected or refused to gather manna, they would have perished in the wilderness. And so with every sinner who neglects or refuses to come to Christ for the bread of life. But while it is admitted, that of ourselves we have not the power to enable us to forsake our sins and come to Christ; we have the means, and the ability to use the means, to accomplish all God requires at our hands. Those who do as well as they can, do well enough.

The Gospel presents to us, through the merits of Christ, salvation for the lost, pardon for the guilty, adoption for the rebel,

peace for the wicked, holiness for the polluted, communion with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And, to crown the whole, we have the promise of glory, immortality, and eternal life. But to obtain these blessings we must use the means. A man may starve to death in a cook-shop; and so the poor sinner may perish, while there is an ample provision for him,—bread in our Father's house, and to spare.

We are not to suppose God will avert the order of His providence, violate His own law, and destroy the moral agency of man; and compel him to comply with the requirements of the Gospel, and be saved against his own will. But on the part of the poor sinner who desires salvation, an effort must be made to obtain the blessing.

God does not feed His creatures with the bread of life as we have heard noblemen are sometimes fed in China. They approach the board of comforts, laden with rich dainties, and a servant standing on either hand crams the food into their mouth. But to obtain spiritual meat, we must seek for it, believe in Christ, and, through His merits, hope for it, agonize and fervently pray for it. We are commanded to ask that we may receive, and seek that we may find.

This is a duty we should perform not only

in the morning of life, but every morning during our life. The Israelites gathered the manna in the morning before the sun waxed hot. And the psalmist said, "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." And so it should be with us. We should never let the world give our souls the first salute in the morning; but as soon as we rouse from sleep, and are sufficiently awake to know where we are, we should instantly lift up our hearts to God in prayer and thanksgiving. And before we enter into the whirl of business, or allow the mind to be agitated by the anxieties and cares of life, we should fall upon our knees and thank the Lord for the mercies of the past night, and implore wisdom, grace, and strength to keep us from sinning against God during the day, in thought, word, or deed. This should always be our first business in the morning. The children of Israel gathered their food in the morning, and did not wait till noon for their breakfast. Our duty to God should be uppermost in our minds, and the first duty we perform every morning through life.

SECTION VI.

The gathering of manna was not only a

morning work, but it was also an every-day work. And on each day they used that which they gathered. God, in His wisdom, kept them in His own power, that they might feel their dependence on Him for their daily bread. They could not gather enough to supply themselves with manna for months or years, and then indulge in avarice and sloth, and, like the rich, foolish farmer, who supposed he had enough laid up in store for many years, say, "Soul, take thine ease."

The Israelites were not to lay up the manna till the morrow. "Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning." "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses ; but some of them left it until the morning:" and for their pains they had a repulsive mass of putrefaction. God, in great mercy, condescends to render disobedience and sin irksome, that the sinner may become weary of his sins and forsake them.

As the children of Israel gathered manna every day, so it is with Christians. Under this dispensation of mercy and truth through Jesus Christ, we should gather spiritual food daily. This is our privilege, and this we are commanded to do. We are taught by our Saviour to ask, not for our yearly, monthly,

or weekly bread, but, "Give us this day our daily bread."

It is to be feared some Christians who sincerely "*look up*" every Sabbath morning, and strive to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and continue every hour of the day to make a little advancement in the way to holiness and heaven; yet when Monday morning comes, are so absorbed in business, that they can scarcely find time to attend to secret devotion, read the word of God, or observe family prayer. With them it is the world,—the world,—the world,—from Monday morning till Saturday night. And when the next Sabbath dawns upon them, they devoutly "*look up*" again for spiritual food, and perhaps, not having indulged in any known sin during the week, (except the omission of duty,) and being perfectly sincere in their profession of religion, they confidently "*look up*" for a blessing, obtain a *crumb*, and are thankful. In this way they may continue spiritually to exist,—that is, the spark of spiritual life does not become altogether extinct. They continue to have a place in the church of Christ, and have a name to live. In addition to this, in the lovefeast, and at the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, they hope

to obtain a "Benjamin's portion," to last them three months.

This class of professors must be called Christians. Surely they are not pagans. But they contribute very little to the spiritual interest of the church to which they may belong. And it is to be fondly hoped they will reach heaven at last; but it will be, as Job says, "by the skin of the teeth."

A man may continue to live a while if he partakes of food only once or twice a week; but he will be a feeble man, and of no use in the world. And so with the Christian who obtains a full measure of spiritual food only once in three months, or once a week: he may continue to be a Christian, but, in that case, he will be a feeble one, and of but little use in promoting the spiritual interest of the church. If he is a sheep of the fold of the Great Shepherd, he is a lean sheep.

But the Christian who daily attends to the means of grace, and obtains constant supplies of manna, the "bread sent down from heaven," and the "meat that endureth unto everlasting life," will be made fat and flourishing, "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." They will be found men on their feet, and Samsons on their knees. They have power with God, and go

on from one degree of strength to another, till they attain to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Happy in a Saviour's love, and being strong in the strength which God supplies, they are able to successfully battle with the ills in life, conquer their spiritual foes, and triumph at last.

The storehouse of the Lord is inexhaustible. All may obtain daily supplies, and all are invited to partake without cost or charge. Let us daily strive to attend to the conditions necessary, that the end may be obtained. Then we will not have so often to complain of the meagreness and poverty of our souls, the weakness of our faith, the coldness of our hearts, nor the want of enjoyment in the service of God.

SECTION VII.

We have observed the children of Israel gathered manna every morning during the week; but on the sixth day they gathered a double portion, so they had a sufficient supply on the Sabbath; for on that day it did not descend, which is a convincing proof that it was supernatural. If it had been a natural production, it would have fallen on the Sabbath, as at other times; and had there not been a supernatural influence to

keep it sweet and pure, it would have been corrupt on the Sabbath, as well as on other days. None was to be gathered on the Sabbath day, which also is a convincing proof that the Sabbath was considered a Divine institution previous to the giving of the Mosaic Law. Therefore, whatever is gathered or earned on the Sabbath day is a double curse in any man's property.

From these circumstances we may learn a lesson in reference to spiritual things,—that is, in this season of our mortal career we should labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. Then, when the eternal Sabbath comes, we shall enjoy the Divine favour, “eat of the hidden manna,” and have given to us “the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

SECTION VIII.

The manna descended in great abundance ; so that there was no lack of food. It appears from what Moses states in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus, that the children of Israel gathered it in one common heap, from which all the Israelites took “an omer for every man,” according to the number residing in each tent. Some gathered more and some less, “and when

they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." An omer contained about three quarts,—a large allowance for each person young or old.

When the Lord supplies the wants of His people, it is not in scanty measures, but in rich abundance; and so it is in spiritual things. The Lord has made an unbounded, inexhaustible, rich, free, and full provision for every human soul. An atonement of less than infinite merit would not have been ample to reach the case of fallen man, who, having committed an offence against an Infinite Being, incurred infinite demerit. If an atonement was made at all, it must have been of infinite merit, or it never would have been accepted by the Father; and, in that case, Christ would never have been released from the prison of the grave. But Jesus Christ having suffered on Mount Calvary, "the Just for the unjust," the sacrifice was accepted, and then our Saviour burst the barriers of the tomb, and came forth. Of this, God has given assurance to the whole world, in that He raised Christ from the dead. In the resurrection of Christ, we behold the consummation of the whole scheme of human redemption.

Now, as the atonement is infinite in

merit, it reaches the case of every man, even the vilest of the vile: all,—*all* may participate in its benefits, if they fully surrender themselves to Christ. No distinction of age or sex of people will or can prevent them from participating in the blessings so freely offered through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SECTION IX.

The manna that descended in such rich abundance had the appearance of small round white seeds. Moses says, "like coriander seed, white." And, like wheat or barley, it was not prepared for digestion in its crude state, but was necessarily ground in a mill, or bruised in a mortar, then baked in pans, and so became fit for use.

Now, admitting the manna to be an eminent type of Christ, we may observe that, as the manna was bruised in a mortar, and baked in pans, as Moses has informed us, so the Prophet Isaiah, speaking of the promised Messiah, declares that "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." And John the Divine speaks of His treading "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Verily our Saviour endured the fiery indignation and wrath kindled by

our sins and transgressions against the law of God.

SECTION X.

The manna, when pulverized and baked in pans, needed no other mixture or ingredient to make it palatable, for it was rich and luscious as oil. Moses says, "The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil." Also Moses declares that "the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."

And so it is with the blessings presented in the Gospel,—the true manna that came down from heaven. It needs no foreign recommendation to suit it to the spiritual taste of the penitent, hungering, sin-sick soul. Such "desire the sincere milk of the word." The pure, unadulterated truths of the Gospel suit the penitent sinner best. The Psalmist exclaimed, "O taste, and see that the Lord is good." And again he exclaims, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" The precious promises presented in the Gospel are admirably adapted both to the penitent and to the believing soul.

SECTION XI.

It is wonderful to contemplate on the marked ingratitude of the children of Israel. They were permitted to "eat angels' food," which was sweet as honey; but for which they were not only ungrateful, but they despised it as light food, when compared with leeks and onions,—rank Egyptian fare.

And it is also mournful to contemplate the ingratitude of sinners who despise the ample provision made for our ruined world. Jesus Christ "is despised and rejected of men. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

Sin has so benumbed the moral sensibilities of man, that he loses all desire to partake of spiritual meat. A romance, a philosophical disquisition, a moral declaration, or a political harangue, is far better suited to his taste than a Gospel sermon. The moral affections have become so vitiated by sin in the heart of the unregenerated, that there is no hungering and thirsting after the true bread from heaven and the waters of life,—no desire to obtain the mind that was in Christ; and even the offers of mercy are neglected or despised.

SECTION XII.

Some of the manna was preserved to

future generations. "Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept." This was in order that their children and children's children might see what God had done for their fathers. The remembrance was to be preserved. Eaten bread is often too soon forgotten: this was to be remembered.

As a portion of manna was laid up before the testimony of the Lord, so Jesus Christ has ascended on high, in the presence of the Father, there to intercede for us. He is the hidden manna that all shall receive who overcome their spiritual foes through His grace and strength. They shall at last ascend with Him in glory, and ever be with the Lord.

SECTION XIII.

Another remarkable circumstance connected with the manna is, its continuance forty years. The Israelites were truly ungrateful and rebellious; but in the midst of all their ingratitude and acts of rebellion against God, the manna was mercifully continued till "they came to the land in-

habited: they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan." Then, under the command of Joshua, they crossed over Jordan, and gained a possession in the land that flowed with milk and honey.

The continuance of this heavenly bread for the space of forty years may be considered an encouragement to us. Though the multitude may set His counsels at nought, and dare to trample upon the mercy of God, still mercy endureth. Christ will never forsake His people. Just before He ascended to His native heavens, after giving His disciples the Divine command to "go and preach the Gospel to every creature," He gave the heart-cheering and soul-relieving promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Though sinners take their course, the Lord will never leave nor forsake His people. In the fire or in the water, in youth or in old age, in sickness or in death, the Lord will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him.

In conclusion, let it be remembered, the children of Israel did not eat manna till they had gathered it. And so, in like manner, we must use the means,—make a full and unreserved surrender unto the

Lord, and live in obedience to His commands; then we may hope to obtain spiritual food, and be blessed in the use of the means in this world, and hereafter partake of the hidden manna in that kingdom that is out of sight and full of glory, and be forever "free from the law of sin and death."

CHAPTER XX.

SPIRIT OF LAW OF LIFE.

1. LAW opposed to Law. 2. The Spirit of life. 4. Law of sin. 5. Its operations. 6. A nature opposite to sin. 7. How freed from inward corruption. 8. Privilege of believers. 9. Ground of consolation. 10. How the Christian can do all things. 11. In Christ a fulness.

SECTION I.

It is the Christian's great privilege to be freed from condemnation. Though he be in the flesh, he may walk "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That is, they who are in Christ walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, because the Spirit of life delivers them from the dominion and power of sin.

It may be a matter of inquiry, How can we be free from condemnation if any seeds of corruption remain in the heart? We here have the answer, "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

In the work of regeneration the Spirit breaks the power of corruption, and by the continued influence and assistance of the Spirit of life we at length obtain a full and final deliverance from indwelling corruption.

By nature we are in a state of sin and bondage, and exposed to death. But believers are freed from sin and death "by the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus."

Here appears to be law opposed to law. By the one we are freed from the other. In this we see a direct opposition. *First*, Of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to the law of sin and death; *Second*, Of the Spirit against sin; and, *Third*, Of life against death.

The question may be asked, What are we to understand by these two laws? Some suppose that by the "law of the Spirit of life," we are to understand the doctrines of the Gospel, or the covenant of grace, as proclaimed in the Gospel; and by the "law of sin and death," the covenant of

works. Others understand it as referring to the law of God, moral and ceremonial, written and published by Moses, which curseth all who do not continue in all things that are written therein to do them.

Paul to the Romans argues the question, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith."

But others think that this is not the meaning that should be attached to the apostle's words when he says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;" because the covenant of grace, or, in other words, the doctrine of faith in Christ, is not called the "law of the Spirit of life" in any other place in the Holy Scriptures. And also, because it seems very harsh to call the law of God, which forbids and condemns sin, the "law of sin and death."

But we understand these words of the apostle to imply,—

First, The commanding and condemning power of the law of God, on account of sin and indwelling corruption.

Second, That Jesus Christ by His meritorious death, offering Himself a sacrifice to expiate sin, is the procuring cause of our

freedom from condemnation. The apostle also adds, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." And by His Spirit uniting us to Himself, and enabling us to believe on Him, we are justified and delivered from the guilt of sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

SECTION II.

But a difficulty or perplexing doubt may arise in the mind of the believer, from a sense of his inherent corruption, impetuously inclining him to sin, as the apostle represents the case very pathetically where he says, "For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me." Hence we often draw a melancholy conclusion against ourselves, seeing the power of indwelling corruption is so great, that, of ourselves, we are not able to resist it. Therefore to us, it may often appear as though at length it will absolutely prevail against us, and bring us under its dominion to our everlasting ruin.

But to answer these objections, and re-

move these difficulties, the apostle instances in himself what is common to all who are in Christ Jesus, by declaring that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death.

By the "law of the Spirit of life" we may understand that powerful and conservative influence of the Spirit of life by which believers are freed from the bondage of corruption. This law of the Spirit of life includes that grace and principle of spiritual life experienced by believers in their regeneration; and, also, the continued, gracious presence and assistance of the Spirit of Christ, disposing and enabling believers to oppose and mortify their indwelling corruption, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

This principle of spiritual life may be called "a law," because of its power to *command*, to *rule*, and *govern* our will and affections.

Also it is called the law of the Spirit of life, because the new nature, or spiritual life, is the work of the Spirit: for that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. We become spiritual in our dispositions, inclinations, and actions, the effects of the Spirit of regeneration.

For this new nature is cherished, strengthened, and perfected by the continued gracious presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, that raised Christ from the dead. The same also raises believers from the death of sin, and will raise them at the last day to immortal glory : therefore He is called the Spirit of life.

SECTION III.

The Spirit of life is said to be in Christ Jesus because He died that we might live. He purchased this life for His people, and has said to them, " Because I live, ye shall live also.

The Spirit of life was manifested in raising Christ from the dead. He burst the barriers of the tomb, that believers might have a pledge of His power and goodness to raise them from the death of sin, and from the grave.

The Holy Spirit was given to the human nature of Christ primarily and principally, and in a greater measure than to believers, " for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." And the Spirit is given to believers from Christ, and for His sake. Our Saviour said, " When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which pro-

ceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." Also, it is written, "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And again, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Now "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His." And hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us." Our faith and other graces are strengthened when we look to Christ, and pray for the influence of His Holy Spirit upon our hearts. He has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

SECTION IV.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is opposed to the law of sin and death. By sin, we understand the corruption of our human nature,—corrupt inclinations, affections, and passions,—these are the body of sin.

Indwelling corruption may be called "a law," because, though it has no just right to rule or govern, yet, as an invader and usurper, it has obtained and exercises a most deadly and tyrannical power over the unregenerate. Here it sways an *ebon* sceptre over the hearts of the children of disobedience.

It is called "the law of sin" to point out the moral evil of corrupt dispositions, corrupt principles and affections. Though they do not always break forth into outward acts, still they are opposed to the law of God, and expose all who are under the dominion of sin, to His righteous judgments and indignation.

It is called the law of death, because the native tendency of it is to misery and death. It makes us liable to death and eternal misery, according to the holy and righteous law of God. "The wages of sin is death."

This is the corrupt principle which the Apostle Paul calls "a law."

He says, "I find then a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me." Here he found something in himself opposed to the law of God. And therefore he adds, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." The word "law" is used in this case the same as it is when the apostle speaks of being "made free from the law of sin and death."

SECTION V.

Indwelling sin not only reigns in the

unregenerate, but often rises in the heart, and assaults and molests the believer. It is called "a law," on account of its powerful influence and impetuous activity to tempt and illude us to commit actual sin, notwithstanding all the restraints of God's holy and righteous laws, the prohibition and threatenings of His righteous judgments, His restraining providences, alluring mercies, and awakening and smarting challenges of a guilty conscience. It works and prevails both against the mercies and the judgments of God. It is so subtle, so powerful, that no human law, with its most vigorous execution, can altogether restrain the outward acts and effects of it. It is so impetuous and bewitching with the prospect of temporal and sensual rewards, that it overcomes the restraints the poor sinner lays upon himself,—he will even break his own vows, purposes, and promises. This affords daily exercise and trouble, doubts and fears, to the believer. Therefore it must be a great comfort, a mercy, and a great privilege, to be freed from and secured against the assaults, the danger, and the mischief of this restless, subtle, and implacable enemy.

SECTION VI.

But, it may be asked, How does the Spirit of life set us free from the law of sin and death? We answer, by renewing our nature, and implanting in us spiritual dispositions and holy inclinations, contrary to the power and acts of corrupt nature, with ability to exert the powers of the new nature to the mortification of sin, and to bring forth fruit unto holiness, and "delight in the law of God after the inward man." For "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

When God, in His mercy, translates a sinner from a state of nature to a state of grace, He gives the body of sin a deadly wound, and deprives it of its reigning power and dominion by infusing a new nature directly the opposite to that of sin, which, being holy and supernatural, gives the soul an aversion to sin, and a strong habitual inclination towards spiritual things.

The Holy Spirit is given to believers to dwell and abide with them, and to establish a spiritual union and communion between them and Christ. And being members of Christ's mystical body, they receive new supplies from Him, their living

Head, to cherish the new nature, strengthen their graces, and weaken their corruptions. Also, being in Christ, they are freed from the guilt of their corruptions, and the full and final conquest over the corruption of our nature, and the destruction of indwelling sin.

The Spirit of life also frees believers from the law of sin and death, not only by the grace of regeneration, uniting us to Christ Jesus, but by promoting the mortification of sin in us in a way of duty by these renewed supplies which He affords us, and by which He continues to assist us after our conversion, until we arrive at a state of perfection in Christ Jesus.

He continues to fit and frame us for our duty both to God and man. He blesses the means appointed for the destruction of sin, and makes them effectual. He cherishes the several graces, and furnishes the soul with fresh supplies of wisdom and strength to discover the wiles, escape the snares, and resist the assaults, of indwelling sin, and succeed conquering at last, when the death blow shall be struck to sin in the heart.

Thus, all who are in Christ Jesus are made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life that is in Him.

SECTION VII.

It does appear that a sense of indwelling sin is consistent with a lively exercise of faith, and even a knowledge of our interest in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul was deeply exercised with the sense of remaining corruption, when he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Nevertheless, in this his faith in Christ is so strong, that he takes hold on the great Gospel privilege of freedom from sin and condemnation, and assures himself that, through the strength of the Redeemer, he shall obtain a complete and final deliverance from the guilt, the filth, the power, the presence, and pollution of sin.

It may be well to observe the manner and circumstances of the apostle's applying these great privileges to himself. It was attended with a deep sense of the corruption of his nature, of the moral evil and danger of it. A person exercised with a deep sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and indwelling corruption, is truly a fit subject for these privileges. For it is no less matter of comfort for him to know that in due time he shall be delivered from sin and indwelling corruption, than to be

assured that he is freed from the wrath of God. He labours on, he strives and prays no less earnestly for freedom from sin than he does for freedom from death and hell. And at last, he is enabled to rejoice that in Christ he finds full redemption, not only from wrath to come, but from the law of sin, all of which may be enjoyed the moment we consecrate all to Christ, and believe for a present and full salvation.

SECTION VIII.

The application of this privilege in the case of St. Paul was accompanied with great humility. He was diligent in the way of duty, in the use of all proper means. He was temperate in all things, and kept under his body to bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he might himself become "a castaway,"

He so completely maintained the spiritual warfare, that when he was about to be offered up, and the time of his departure was at hand, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

But he did not trust to his own endeavours, nor expect his freedom from indwelling sin by any pains he could take to mortify the deeds of the body, but by the law and efficiency, strength and efficacy, of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

His application of Gospel privileges was accompanied with a knowledge of, and faith in, the great doctrines of the Gospel. He was conscious of his own consent to the covenant of grace, and knew that the dominion of sin was broken in his regeneration, the guilt removed in his justification, and its power and pollution all subdued in his sanctification.

Verily, this is the great privilege of the true believer, to know, as promised in the Gospel, that in him the power of sin is destroyed by the influence of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

These blessings the apostle expected on rational grounds, which he evidently well understood,—such blessings as are understood and enjoyed by all sanctified believers, whose hope is not like the unfounded hope of some who expect great blessing on the ground of their own merits, or hope to be saved on the ground of their innocence, while their hearts are still unrenewed by grace.

Our application should in no way be presumptuous or unwarrantable by trusting to the arm of flesh. We have a good foundation for our hope, but must not view it as a means to make us self-secure, and live in the neglect of duty, but as an encouragement to walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh.

We are delivered from death, not that we may serve the law of sin, but that we may live according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, not forgetting that we must do this and live.

SECTION IX.

This doctrine affords ground for comfort and joy to every believing soul, whose hope for deliverance from the law of sin and death is accompanied with the properties and qualifications I have endeavoured to describe.

You who are exercised with a deep sense of indwelling corruption, and are anxiously desiring to be delivered from it; and you who are diligent to mortify sin by resisting it, and living in the way of duty; you who are humble and self-denying, trusting in the grace and merits of Christ, and in the efficiency of the Holy Spirit to subdue and destroy sin, and purify the heart; you whose

application of Gospel privileges is accompanied with an experimental knowledge of, and lively faith in, the great doctrines of the Gospel, in obedience and conformity to the will of God, in receiving and relying upon Christ alone for salvation, honouring Him as Prophet, Priest, and King; and you who seriously and firmly resolve to improve Gospel privileges, as obligations and encouragements to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;—to you this doctrine will verily afford great comfort, in the midst of all the ills and temptations in life, and be an unspeakable source of consolation in the hour of death. Your past sins shall be washed away; the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. And you who are justified, your sanctification is begun, and shall be perfected notwithstanding all the opposition of indwelling sin; for if you prove faithful to the grace given, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will make you free from the law of sin and death.

SECTION X.

Though we may often find our wicked and rebellious nature stirred up to resist the law of God; yet if we do unfeignedly and habitually resist the motions of sin, and

yield ourselves obedient to the influence of the Holy Spirit, our remaining sin and corruption shall be removed. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him." He will make us free from the law of sin and death.

This is a marvellous and matchless ground of comfort to those who believe. It serves to strengthen our faith against the workings and suggestions of unbelief. For while we confer with flesh and blood, unbelief will ask, Can we expect the assistance of the Holy Spirit, seeing we do not and cannot merit it? The answer is, "Christ hath died;" He has purchased the blessing for us; through His merits we may receive it; He has promised it to us, and He will make His merits and promises effectual.

Again, unbelief will say, that to destroy this body of sin and death, which is so deeply and strongly rooted in our nature and constitution, and to enable us to walk after the Spirit, is a work so difficult, that the accomplishment of it is not to be expected in this world. But the answer is, The work is difficult, and surpasses our power; but what of that? It is easy for the almighty power of the Spirit of life to accomplish. If we use the means, the victory shall be won, and the end obtained.

Also, unbelief will object against our undertaking the great work assigned us as responsible intelligences, because we do not find such strength and grace in ourselves, as may be proportionate to the greatness and spirituality of the work. But we should be encouraged to engage in the work, not in our own strength, but in the strength of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The apostle exhorted Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And again he says, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

A servant once said to his master that if in the Bible he should find the Lord commanded him to go through a stone wall, he would obey. His master said, "You could never get through." The servant replied, "That may be so; but that is not my business. It would be my business to go at it. I must obey; and it will be the Lord's business to bring me through." Christ helping us, we can do all things.

SECTION XI.

To strengthen the faith and hope of believers, I will here notice some instances and evidences of the power of the law of the Spirit of life.

You who are agonizing for a deliverance from a body of sin and death, entertain no doubts. The promises cannot fail. Hope and expect that all you need will be granted.

First. Because the power of the Spirit of life is manifest in making the believer forsake those sins his natural constitution inclines to, to which he has been accustomed, and which have brought him worldly gain and sensual pleasure. The Spirit of grace has done this in many, and will do it in all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; accept him as our only Saviour; are taught by Him as our Prophet; trust in Him as our great High Priest; and obey Him as our King.

Second. The power of the law of the Spirit of life is manifest in causing the true believer to renounce his own righteousness, and rely only upon Christ for righteousness and strength. This is so much opposed to the natural pride and corruption of the depraved heart, that it can only be accomplished by the agency and power of the Holy Spirit.

Third. The power of the Spirit of life also appears in enabling us to "look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, which are eternal." How great then is the power of the Spirit of

life! and how completely adapted to our case! We are weak, and need strength; polluted, and need holiness; ruined by sin, and need salvation; but in Christ there is a fulness. In Him we have all we need.

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